



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **St Martin's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Wallace Road  
Bradley  
Bilston  
Wolverhampton  
WV14 8BS

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Diocese: Lichfield**

Local authority: Wolverhampton

Dates of inspection: 3 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 10 March 2011

School's unique reference number: 141825

Headteacher: Ben Davis

Inspector's name and number: Susan Taylor 688

### **School context**

St Martin's Church of England VC Primary School has 222 children aged 4-11 years. The school population is predominately White British. The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium, which is additional funding to give extra support to children in receipt of free school meals, or whose parents are in the forces, is above average. The school is part of a multi-academy trust with Field View Primary School. They also work in partnership with Grove Primary School who are due to join the multi-academy trust in April 2016. St Martin's has its own Headteacher within the trust.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Martin's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.**

- The headteacher, leadership team and directors have a clear vision for the school based upon Christian values which impact upon all aspects of pupil development and well-being.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary.
- Strong and effective partnerships exist between school, church and parents.

### **Areas to improve**

- To make links between Christian values and the Bible more visual and constantly accessible to the pupils.
- Create greater consistency in the opportunities for prayer and reflection in classrooms.
- Develop the use of outdoor areas to provide greater opportunities for quiet reflection.

### **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners**

Christian values clearly underpin every aspect of St Martin's Primary School. As a result the quality of care and support is excellent and pupils are happy, behave well and are motivated to learn. They are well-prepared for the next stage of their education. The way each child is considered unique and their needs catered for is highly valued by both pupils and parents, and so attendance is improving all the time because pupils want to be in school. Pupils are very proud of their school. Hardworking and caring staff, together with structured training and support, has enabled pupils to achieve well academically. Pupils are confident at linking the schools' values from the life and teachings of Jesus to their own lives. This is particularly evident in their relationships towards each other and how they link that to Jesus' teaching on friendship and forgiveness. The school gives charity and community work a high profile and pupils see this as demonstrating values of compassion and service. One pupil said, *"If you help other people you feel better inside"*. Consequently Jesus is becoming a role model for their lives, and a firm foundation for all spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) they experience. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and residential opportunities which, as well as being much enjoyed by the pupils, broadens their experiences. The school has a clear definition of spirituality which is tastefully displayed in the hall. It is central to the life of the school and pupils have an understanding of it which is appropriate to their age. As one pupil explained *"It is about God being all around us and making us feel better"*. Opportunities are provided across the curriculum, which are based upon the principles of *"Celebrate Diversity, Spark Curiosity, Breed Creativity"*, to enable pupils to develop their spirituality. Although there are sheltered areas outside, as well as being a 'forest school' and having a garden area, pupils would like to see these areas further developed. Each classroom has a reflection area and in the best of these, they are well-used and valued by the pupils. Pupils enjoy religious education (RE) which contributes to the Christian character of the school, especially with respect to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The RE scheme of work enables pupils to build their knowledge and understanding of core Christian beliefs and of other faith communities. Pupils have an understanding of difference and diversity; as one pupil said, *"God thinks we are all special"*. This has been enhanced by the school's involvement in the Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Network and the multi-faith tour of local religious buildings. Links with the other schools in the multi-academy trust, which have a more mixed ethnicity, also provide further opportunities for development. Pupils have some knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith due to their links with the Watoto project in Uganda and the shoebox appeal.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Whole school collective worship takes place daily and is led by a variety of leaders. Consequently pupils experience a range of styles that engage their interest. Children are enthusiastic about collective worship, respond well spiritually and show good attitudes and respectful behaviour. Worship themes are planned around the school's Christian values and festivals within the Christian calendar. Planning clearly links the topic to Bible passages and the consistency of the delivery has been enhanced by the materials provided by the incumbent.

These themes develop pupils spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, and enable them to take responsibility for their own behaviour as well as helping the wider community. Collective worship provides the opportunity to combine the schools values to the life and teachings of Jesus. Children articulate clearly, stories they have heard in worship and their significance for their own lives. Worship starts with the lighting of candles signifying *"Jesus as the light of the world"*. The children understand this symbolism. They participate enthusiastically in singing and speak of many worship songs they enjoy. The Lord's Prayer is a regular part of worship as is a Bible story followed by a time of reflection. During the inspection children came into the hall for worship excited as they, and staff, were dressed as book characters to celebrate 'World Book Day'. Pupils showed a great deal of reverence during worship, participated fully and listened and reflected in silence. Although pupils lead prayers in worship and often participate in drama and music, they would like even more involvement. The incumbent leads worship weekly and this, together with visits to St Martin's Church, enable the children to further experience Anglican traditions and core Christian beliefs. The impressive cross in the hall, designed and made by the pupils and a visiting artist, provides a focal point for the school, and leaves visitors in no doubt as to the Christian ethos of the school. The pupils have a very clear understanding of core Christian beliefs including God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One young child explained the Holy Spirit as *"it is all around you, you can't see it but you can feel it"*. Knowledge and understanding of core Christian beliefs is very good, for example Pentecost is *"a celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit"*, Easter is *"When Jesus sacrificed himself for us"*, Lent is *"When Jesus went into the desert for 40 days and the devil tempted him"*. Prayer has a high profile in school and in classrooms. Children show an understanding of prayer and value it in their lives. *"Prayer is not just words"*, *"God answers prayers"*, was their view. Pupils, the worship co-ordinator, headteacher and foundation directors monitor and evaluate worship and, where necessary, changes are implemented so as to enhance the provision. The introduction into classes of the resource *"Working on Worship"* has added a further dimension to worship and is much enjoyed by the pupils. In particular their knowledge and understanding of the role of Anglican clergy has been enhanced through interviewing the parish priest with questions they have devised.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding**

The school is led by a headteacher who puts Christian values at the centre of all decisions. This has impacted upon the quality of the care and support given to pupils and their families. Consequently pupils make strong progress academically, show positive attitudes to learning and behave really well. In March 2015 St Martin's formed a multi-academy trust with a local community school. This trust formation has not only enabled St Martin's to continue to be a good church school but has seen its distinctiveness and effectiveness enhanced. The journey from federation to multi-academy trust meant that the school's leadership went back to basics to determine what it meant to be a church school and what made St Martin's distinctive. All leaders confidently articulate and promote a clear vision for the school based upon a defined set of Christian values linked to the life and teachings of Jesus. These Christian values have been dovetailed with British values and they underpin leadership, staff attitudes and pupil outcomes. The structure of the trust ensures that the long-term Christian distinctiveness of St Martin's is protected both in the appointment of headteacher, executive headteacher, directors and trustees. The school values training and support, and actively encourages staff to take on leadership roles; the executive headteacher is an excellent role model for future leaders. The further development of Christian distinctiveness is given a high profile in school improvement. There are clear development points, with identified targets and timescales on the school development plan. The parish priest is very supportive of the school both practically and prayerfully. Links between the church and school are excellent, for example, church members regularly come into school to read with children, have lunch with them and help with activities. The school works closely with the diocese to access training and support and so, consequently, RE and worship are well led and managed. The effectiveness of the school as a church school is monitored and evaluated carefully by the trust and outcomes reported through the committee structure. The school has been involved in *Open Door* in Bradley and *Hope in the Park* in Bilston. The choir

have visited Lichfield Cathedral and the Bilston Pentecostal youth pastor regularly leads worship and is actively involved in school. This deepens pupils understanding of the wider Christian church. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and feel that their children are safe and secure. Parents feel valued as an integral part of their child's education. Communication is good and staff are always prepared to listen. The development points from the previous SIAMS have been fully addressed.

SIAMS report March 2016 St Martin's CE (C) Primary School, Bradley, Wolverhampton WV14 8BS