

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Saint Martin's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Lower Church Lane,
Tipton,
West Midlands.
DY4 7PG

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Sandwell

Date of inspection: February 7th 2008

Date of last inspection: September 2003

School's unique reference number: 103987

Headteacher: Miss Sarah Bott.

Inspector's name and number: Mr David Huw Williams : 348

School context

Saint Martin's school is a popular school situated in the town of Tipton. The majority of the children attending the school are from the two main wards of Horsley Heath and Great Bridge. In the main children come from an area where levels of social disadvantage are above average. The school serves a socially diverse community with the majority of children from White British heritage.

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Saint Martin's as a Church of England school are good.

Strong Christian principles underpin all aspects of school life which has a positive impact upon pupils' learning and behaviour. The creation of a safe and secure community ensures that the children mature both spiritually and academically. The caring attitudes of the staff exemplifies the way in which the school's Christian ethos is the foundation to its drive to be successful.

Established strengths

- The strong Christian ethos modelled so capably by the Headteacher ensures that all pupils are highly valued.
- The good quality collective worship which impacts on the school's distinctiveness.
- The support for the school and the confidence expressed in it by governors, parents and the wider community.
- The children's good personal, social, moral and spiritual development is consistently supported throughout the school by all staff.

Focus for development.

- Adopt and implement a systematic approach to the monitoring and evaluation of worship so as to include foundation governors, staff and children.
- Extend the variety of worship settings and style so that pupils can be more personally involved.
- To support the children's spiritual development create quiet spaces inside and outside the school.

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

The recently appointed headteacher, ably supported by her staff and governors, is establishing a positive climate where all pupils are challenged to achieve. The school's aims, its ethos and mission statements are all underpinned by Christian values. This is evident in the love, care and respect afforded to all. The inclusive nature of the school helps to encourage in the children a sense of identity

and security. Pupils, parents and visitors feel welcome, safe and valued. Pupils and parents are confident in the structures for help and support within the school. Parents commented that the school has created a *'real family atmosphere that is based on Christian values'* and this has positively impacted upon raising children's self esteem. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. This is due in the main to a very positive behaviour policy and the excellent support that is afforded to all the children. The school council is an affirmative influence and ensures pupils are involved in decision making in school. Decisions made include selecting new playground equipment. Children are very caring of each other and the HALS and PALS [hall and playground helpers] and the lunch time house team system effectively contribute to this. There is enthusiastic support for charities which has helped the children to look outwards and foster a caring ethos of service and gratitude. Children talk highly of the staff with children commenting *'all teachers understand each unique child'* and *'teachers make it fun to learn'* this supports an environment for successful achievement. Children's achievements both academic and non academic are promptly recognised, rewarded and celebrated through a system of appropriate awards. The school's Christian distinctiveness is authenticated by several good displays in the entrance area of which the following are all good examples stained glass windows depicting Noah and Moses, the large mural of Saint Martin and the school's vision statement. The school's Christian logo, symbols and displays around the school including the school prayer are continual reminders to the children that this is a church school. The worship table, the lectern and the team house names honour the Anglican traditions. The spiritual development of the children is encouraged through reflection at whole school worship time. The provision of specific areas for reflection in and outside the school is a way to support children's spiritual development. The school is currently looking whether the area around Peter's memorial tree is a suitable place to establish an outdoor quiet area to support children's spiritual development. Relationships in the school and the wider community are good, reflecting the philosophy and values of the school. All staff are excellent role models for the children. The positive status that religious education is given can be attributed to the strong leadership of the RE coordinator. This has had a definite impact on the spiritual and cultural well being of the pupils. Appropriate consideration is given to the learning of different faiths, in addition to Christianity so all feel valued and part of school life. The school organises an annual multi faith festival celebration week which is extremely well supported.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is an essential part of the everyday life of the school. Pupils' comments on why they liked whole school worship was *'because we can sing great songs'* and *'because it is fun.'* The worship programme is supported through a good variety of weekly themes and is supplemented with topics based around the major faith festivals. There are presently an appropriate number of different leaders including all class teachers, the vicar and youth leaders. The well planned collective worship is presently informally evaluated. The introduction of a more formal monitoring and evaluation process to include foundation governors, staff and children will enhance this process. The attendance of all staff at whole school worship reinforces the family ethos of the school. Parents welcome the opportunity to come to and be part of the celebrations at Saint Martin's church and those held at the school. Pupils are aware of the distinctive nature of worship and enter and exit the hall in a quiet and respectful way. Children speak positively about worship and look forward to the daily act of worship. They are attentive and respond well with thoughts and opinions. Children are very receptive to the candles and Christian artefacts used as a focus for quiet reflection. Prayer is an integral part of worship with children joining in the school prayer and the Lord's prayer. Prayer is also said in some classrooms at lunch times and at the end of the day. A very good example of this was the use of a 'prayer web' to encourage children to pray for each other. Although pupils are involved in worship they do not lead worship and this is an area for development. The school may like to consider the use of class and key stage worship to support this development. The church and school come together for special festivals in the church to which parents and the community are invited. Relevant understanding of Anglican rituals is aided by appropriate prayers and symbols used in worship. This is underpinned by visits to the church and reinforced by regular visits to the school by the vicar and members of the church community so that there is a cohesive link between church and school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good.

The recently appointed headteacher has a very clear Christian vision for this school and has effectively shared it with her pupils, parents, staff and governors. This is articulated through the creation of a caring family environment, based upon a Christian foundation underpinning the school's drive for continual improvement. Regular discussion by all stakeholders on the Christian distinctiveness of the school is important in maintaining its significance. Good relationships between the governors and the school have positively enhanced the educational provision for the children. Governors are supportive of the school's progress which has had a positive impact upon pupil's achievement. Adults in the school provide good role models. The headteacher values the support from the foundation governors. Although the process for self evaluation is good, the foundation governors' role in monitoring and evaluating the worship life of the school is as yet limited. The headteacher values the support from the chair, governors and the church. The school and the vicar actively work together to provide the children with good experiences of the Anglican rituals and the Christian cycle of festivals. Good and beneficial links have been established with the diocese. The children are eager to share their views with others. Parents consulted during the inspection were very supportive of the school. Pupils and parents are provided with many opportunities both formally and informally to participate in the process for school improvement. Parents were also pleased with the school's community involvement and the happiness and readiness of the children to attend school.

SIAS Report [February 2008] Saint Martin's Church of England Controlled Primary School, Lower Church Lane, Tipton, West Midlands. DY4 7PG