



**Southwark Diocesan
Board of Education**

**STATUTORY
INSPECTION OF
ANGLICAN SCHOOLS**



The National Society

Name and address of school : St Martin in The Fields C of E High School for Girls
155 Tulse Hill, London SW2 3UP

Type of school: Comprehensive 11-18. Voluntary Aided

Diocese: Southwark

School's Unique reference number: 100641

Date of inspection: 6-7 December 2012

Date of last inspection: July 2007

Headteacher: Mrs Lesley Morrison

Chair of Governors: The Revd Rosemary Lain-Priestley

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number : Dr Glyn Willoughby 637

School context

Serving a culturally diverse community, St Martin in The Fields is an oversubscribed academy with 942 girls, including 145 students in the mixed Sixth Form. A large majority of students are Caribbean and black African and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. The majority are from Christian backgrounds with 40% either coming from other faiths comprising mainly Muslim students, or having no faith. The school is a specialist Technology and Sports College.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Martin in the Fields as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The headteacher leads a team of staff who have embedded the distinctive Christian ethos and made a significant impact on the spiritual life of this vibrant school. In this secure and caring environment, cultural diversity is celebrated and students become inspired to believe they can succeed. As a result they develop into compassionate young people who have the inner strength to become responsible and supportive members of the community.

Established strengths

- The clear vision and commitment of the headteacher, strongly supported by senior staff and governors, in embedding the Christian ethos.
- The spirit of hospitality and inclusion growing from the caring ethos.
- The importance of prayer and worship in the life of the school.
- The Christian compassion shown by students to serve the community.

Focus for development

- Explore ways in which the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students can be further enhanced through cross-curricular themes and projects.
- Embed strategies to monitor assessment procedures in RE in order to ensure consistency of standards across the school and also inform planning.

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

Students have a clear understanding of how the school's values impact upon their personal development and, as one student said, 'awaken compassion'. The commitment of the headteacher and senior team to develop the distinctive Anglican heritage results in a spirit of Christian hospitality and inclusion that is embedded in the life of the school and nurtures students as they undertake their spiritual journey through the school. Spirituality permeates the whole school as demonstrated by students wanting to help others and interactive displays enhancing the school environment.

There is a strong appreciation of cultural diversity and students exhibit a sensitivity and empathy towards people of other faiths and no faith. One student spoke of how 'diversity makes our school special.' The character of the school has a significant impact upon their motivation to serve and help others in their own and also the wider community. They become inspired and gain a considerable sense of satisfaction and pride through having the opportunity to be involved in the many activities that range from raising money for charity, supporting younger students, or being involved in the international project with Ghana and Jamaica. Singing with the gospel choir captures the feelings of belonging in the community and also has an uplifting impact on those who are listening.

Everything the school does in planning the curriculum, including the extensive range of activities and trips, has a clear objective to enhance students' personal development and academic progress. The school plans to explore ways in which the student's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be further enhanced through cross-curricular themes and projects.

Relationships are excellent with adults and students openly expressing support for each other. Peer mediation, often involving student mediators, and restorative justice contribute to sustaining positive relationships with an emphasis on developing forgiveness and reconciliation.

The impact of the trusting Christian ethos is that students feel secure and enjoy coming to school. Staff know students well, appreciate their individual needs, and are able to raise their aspirations for the future and, in the words of the headteacher, 'find pathways to success'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Worship and prayer play a central part in the life of the school and make a significant difference to how well students learn and develop as compassionate young people. Worship in school is always Christian but the language and style focus on being a part of the community, and this means students of all faith backgrounds, or of none, are able to participate.

Students have a high regard for the importance of the occasions and recognise the impact on their personal development. As one student said: 'I love assemblies and through praying it helps the school grow as a community'. Another spoke of how 'prayers and songs uplift us for the rest of the week and even for the weekend!' Whether in school worship or even at the valued annual Founder's Day service, students specifically speak of the 'really friendly environment during worship where we all help each other.'

The team of staff and clergy involved in organising and leading worship is very strong and their impact as they share their Anglican faith and heritage nurtures and affirms those present. The chaplain's planning and co-ordination of the programme ensures worship plays a critical role in students' spiritual growth.

In the different acts of worship observed during the inspection, students experienced being within a vibrant family community as they clearly enjoyed taking part whether singing enthusiastically or showing reverence and respect in a period of quiet reflection and prayer. The outstanding singing demonstrates the importance of Gospel music in the life of the school and this enhances the spiritual atmosphere for worship.

The inspiring atmosphere created by students as they worshipped together after school at an extremely well attended Praise and Worship session that they had organised, demonstrated their commitment to the importance of worship and prayer as a means of exploring their faith and developing their spirituality within a safe, supportive environment.

Good procedures are in place to evaluate worship. Governors and staff engage with students in the process that then shapes future planning.

The school fully complies with the statutory requirements for collective worship.

Religious Education is outstanding.

Standards in Religious Studies (RS) at GCSE are above the national average and compare extremely favourably with other core subjects. All students take GCSE at KS4 with the majority now taking the full course GCSE. The majority of students attain or even exceed the target grade. Standards in GCE Advanced Level RS are also favourable when compared with national averages and other subjects.

The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was consistently good and effective planning, monitoring and assessment procedures enable staff to meet the needs of students of all abilities. Effective and sensitive checking of student's understanding during lessons has a positive impact on the quality of learning. Students like the subject, appreciate its relevance to their lives and are able to share their opinions in a sensitive manner. As they share experiences and ideas together, they demonstrate a genuine interest in listening to each other and, as a result, deepen their understanding of different Christian heritages and also other faiths. The

impact of RE on spiritual and moral development is outstanding.

In a Year 7 lesson comparing Christmas in the United Kingdom with other countries, good use of resources combined with a positive, encouraging teaching style enabled each student to be actively involved in a clear process of learning. As they discussed together the similarities and differences between the celebrations in different countries, they demonstrated their developing awareness of cultural diversity and also their growing ability to explore the views and opinions expressed by others.

In the Sixth Form, the style of teaching is imaginatively adapted to their level of maturity as observed in an Advanced Level Philosophy and Ethics lesson where students developed their higher level skills of enquiry as they explored the key ideas held by theologians and scientists about the creation of the world.

The head of RE leads a highly committed and capable team and is in a strong position to lead further developments in the subject. Even though systems to track student progress are effective, the school seeks to embed strategies to monitor assessment procedures in order to ensure consistency of standards and also inform planning.

The leadership and management of the school as a church school are outstanding.

The headteacher, supported by the senior team and governors, has a clear vision for the school. Her spiritual leadership has embedded the distinctive Christian ethos that is conducive to promoting students' spiritual development and has a significant impact upon the success of the school. Within this reflective environment, teamwork is a strong feature and staff feel valued and respected. As a result their positive approach inspires students who, in the family environment, grow in confidence and develop a growing commitment to the service of others.

Able led by the chair, governors are closely involved in reviewing the effectiveness of the school as a church school and, as a result, have a clear and knowledgeable view of strengths and future needs. They are extremely supportive of the headteacher and senior staff and sensitively provide emotional and spiritual care for the school's leaders in order to support the well-being and professional development of all staff. The leadership of the school is further enriched and strengthened as a result of the close partnership with a number of churches. The chaplain, who is also Head of RE and has been appointed since the previous inspection, also supports governors and the senior team with developing the distinctive Christian character. This was a focus for development that arose from the previous inspection.

There are an extensive range of links and partnerships between school and the local, national and global community and also effective relationships with a range of support agencies and services.

The partnership with parents is very strong and those spoken to were extremely supportive of the school. They appreciate being 'embraced' and encouraged to support their child's education through being involved in the life of the school. Other parents describe it as a 'true community' where 'staff nurture the girls and bring out the best in them'. Many said how they value the centrality of faith in the school and the way in which the distinctive Christian character creates a 'spirituality that permeates throughout the school' and motivates students to want to 'serve' and 'help other people'.

December 2012, St Martin in The Fields Church of England High School for Girls,
155 Tulse Hill, London SW2 3UP