

St Martin's C of E Primary and Nursery School



School Improvement Report 2014-15



Introduction

As we end our third year at St Martin's, we can look back and see the impact of our mission statement, 'To Be The Best We Can Be,' and our Christian values of love, kindness, faith, grace, mercy and hope that are embedded within all the we strive for and achieve at St Martin's. Our journey, through the rapid rate of growth of our school (from 32 pupils to nearly 400 in the space of 3 years) has been a challenging one but one that has encompassed many successes along the way. The successes have been made possible through the hard work, commitment and enthusiasm of our children, staff, governors, the Church, outside organisations and the wider community. I would like to thank everyone for all of the energy, time and goodwill they have given to our school improvement priorities and I know, when you read the report, you will recognise that we have a lot to celebrate!

The report is organised under the headings of our school improvement priorities, for each area we looked at successes, any challenges to and any next steps that we need to take. There may be some aspects of the report that use language that is unfamiliar, please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff or a member of the governing body to explain anything to you. A team of governors and staff have responsibility for various school improvement priorities, these teams are known as 'SIP Teams'.

You are invited to look at the report and if you would like to respond in any way to any of the points raised, please use the form at the back of the report or arrange to come in and see me.

A huge thank you to everyone involved in the success of our school.

Tania Beard

Headteacher

1. Leadership & Management of the School: Develop creative, autonomous and accountable leadership within the school so that the school becomes a centre of excellence in learning at the heart of the evolving community of Cranbrook.

1:1 Developing the leadership structure as St Martin's grows which will include two assistant heads, a phase leadership team, an SEN team, subject teams and specific leadership roles across the school.

Successes

1. The way in which the team as a whole has responded to challenges in the past year, with a focus on constant re-evaluation and re-assessment.
2. Meeting the needs of the school as it has grown.
3. TB has felt well supported. The appointment of a School Business Manager (BT) will be key. Caren Flicker, SH, AP and Nat Padley are all part of leading on school improvement. Work across the school is now distributed more effectively.
4. BT now in a position to explore and develop new systems to ensure that the school has clear and efficient processes.
5. The school ethos is clearly understood by all, as recognised recently within the SIAMS inspection. This was also evident to BT as a new member of staff spending time in classrooms.
6. Today's review process is being led by TB, SH and AP as a team – last year was led by only TB.
7. National data for the school has improved significantly across the board. Learning narratives have a clear focus on rigorous learning objectives.
8. Data for more able learners has also improved significantly.

Challenges

1. If TB is off site during the school day, this has to be managed carefully.
2. Recruitment is a complex process – the school is seeking new staff who will support the St. Martin's approach of thinking creatively and being prepared to take risks. This is not an approach which fits all candidates.
3. Each time new staff begin, there is a need to re-visit the ethos.
4. Some staff can see leaders as 'experts' and can step back to allow leaders to manage difficult situations. However, when leaders step back, it is evident that other staff are able to manage situations positively and this should be encouraged.

Next Steps

1. BT to develop new administrative procedures and systems.
2. CPD recording to be developed to strengthen the links between appraisal targets and CPD.
3. CPD records to be completed by staff for in-house training, with opportunities for reflection later to be provided.

1:2 To explore and develop a way of tracking and measuring progress and attainment in line with the new curriculum.

The school elected to retain levels as their method of assessment for as long as possible whilst the

numerous changes to assessment were occurring. The move to 'emerging, developing, secure' and levels of mastery has now been undertaken. The school will report on percentages of pupils who are meeting national expectations.

Successes

1. Continuing to use School Pupil Tracker Online (SPTO) has minimised changes for staff.
2. Evaluating mastery of a subject has always been the St. Martin's approach.
3. Progress made by Pupil Premium children is positive.

Challenges

1. Ensuring that older children are secure with new curriculum requirements.
2. All children will appear to have 'dropped' in achievement as the new average in the new curriculum is significantly higher.
3. Within the current Year 5, 50% are not at national expectations for writing, and one third are not at national expectations for reading or Maths. Within this group, there is a high percentage of children who have experienced a high number of school and house moves which has disrupted their learning.
4. The school will need to demonstrate accelerated progress.
5. Some staff have been disappointed that the data is not reflecting the achievement/progress that has been made – they will need to accept that the measure has changed, and comparisons cannot be made between the two systems. This can be dispiriting, but the books do evidence real progress.
6. SPaG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar) testing has been introduced at KS1 now.
7. Governors having a full understanding of the new method of recording data.
8. OfSTED require the curriculum to be published on the school website but St. Martin's write a new curriculum each term in conjunction with the pupils, based on what is required to meet the needs of the pupils. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and governors need to be able to explain this approach.
9. Having real clarity regarding work undertaken with Pupil Premium and SEND children.
10. It can be difficult for new children to adjust to being in classes where there may be children with very varied needs.

Next Steps

1. Develop thorough planning for making mastery judgements.
2. Timetable an assessment and review of systems for two years time.
3. Record context of Year 5 pupils disrupted learning in School Evaluation Statement.
4. Develop governors' ability to understand how progress is being made - staff to be invited to Teaching & Learning Committee meetings, book scrutiny to be undertaken at T&L.
5. Ensure staff are all familiar with the requirements of the new curriculum and have a clear understanding of the importance of evidence in books.
6. Ensure that SLT have a strong understanding of the importance of accelerating progress and are clear what this looks like.
7. Ensure teachers are able to prioritise and select from the curriculum based on what meets their pupils' needs.
8. Coach less experienced staff to talk clearly about the St. Martin's approach to writing each term's curriculum.

1:3 To further develop a strong governing body who support and challenge and who have a clear understanding of its role and the knowledge and confidence to put it into practice, focusing particularly on the creation of a succession plan to ensure sustained quality of leadership across the governing body.

Successes

1. There has been a strong focus on consideration of the training needs of the governing body (GB).
2. The induction process for new governors has been developed further.
3. Quality of governors' questioning has improved and questions are coming from a broader range of governors.
4. A Succession Planning group has been established, with a leadership assessment framework looking at skills and training needs completed. The GB now has a defined nucleus of governors who are interested in undertaking leadership roles.
5. There was strong governor support for the SIAMS inspection.
6. Governors engaged well with the Learning Walks.
7. The GB has demonstrated a willingness to self-evaluate its own practice and move forward.
8. The GB has ensured it has not been involved with operational matters.
9. New governors have been recruited for the Autumn term, who will bring a diversity of skills.

Challenges

1. There has been a high turn over of governors. There is a clear impact on the GB when trained/experienced governors leave.
2. Governors have not yet started chairing meetings as suggested.

Next Steps

1. Develop challenge/impact questions from governors and continue the move away from process-led questioning.
2. Ensure that the GB continue to develop momentum and direction.
3. Find ways in which governors can have more meaningful dialogue and engagement with staff.
4. Schedule time prior to approval of the next year's SIP for staff leading on a SIP area to present their action plans to governors.
5. Ensure governors are obtaining information from a variety of sources and not solely the Headteacher.
6. Governors to undertake more learning walks in relation to their areas of the SIP.

1:4 To continue to develop the Christian identity of the school within the school and the wider community.

Meg Privett (governor) present. MP has observed many instances of children being kind to each other and teachers supporting positive choices. Children at St. Martin's help each other to understand and support each other's learning. Staff visibly support each other as well. MP feels this all stems from the clear Christian ethos of the school. MP noted that children also have a good knowledge of assembly hymns and engage positively with Collective Worship.

Glenn Greed (governor) had sent apologies.

Successes

1. The recent outstanding SIAMS judgement was a huge achievement for the school.
2. The school has been asked to contribute to a Diocesan course on supporting other schools to prepare for SIAMS.
3. The Christian ethos is embedded across the whole school, including the Forest through experiences of nature.
4. Children do not see Church and school as separate. As Church services are held in school, it is a familiar environment to them.
5. The experience of the SIAMS inspection was positive for staff, including those who have a variety of spiritual beliefs and may have had some anxiety around the inspection taking place.

Challenges

1. Ensuring that as the school continues to grow, the strong ethos of the school is maintained, and is embedded with new children, staff and governors.
2. Ensuring that ethos retains the same high profile and importance within school as it does at the moment.

Next Steps

1. Develop all points detailed within the SIAMS action plan.
2. Empower children and adults to make sense of their world through understanding and growing the stories they tell.
3. Re-engage with the philosophy for children project.
4. Ensure the school retains its sense of openness and being comfortable with visitors to classrooms.
5. Ensure staff can explain how they contribute to and engage with the school ethos.

2. Behaviour & Safety: The school community's understanding of the learning process forms a core 'nucleus' for the way that teaching and learning is understood (Being The Best We Can Be – Principles and Practicalities) so that a strong and cultural identity of effective learning at St Martin's is established and built on.

2:1 The culture of St Martin's is made explicit by the behaviour of all children and adults with everyone taking responsibility for modelling and disseminating our culture which means that children who are newcomers to the school and those children who may find meeting the expectations of the school more challenging are supported by the whole community.

Successes

1. This area was recognised within the SIAMS inspection to be a considerable strength in school.
2. The audit undertaken by the Behaviour Support Team showed the strength of understanding of all staff to be very significant. The audit team were very impressed with

- the skill level demonstrated by teachers to support children to make good choices.
3. Children arrive with very different, and sometimes very difficult, school histories yet thrive within the St. Martin's environment.
 4. The school has positive relationships with many families.
 5. The school now has a critical mass of children who know how to behave and behave positively in school. Even the youngest children are able to behave well and they learn through seeing older children making good choices.
 6. Children on the Autistic Spectrum have been very well managed by staff, and staff have been able to continue providing well for other children in class.
 7. The way in which the curriculum is developed between teachers and children means the children are engaged and motivated to learn, which is reflected in the data results.
 8. Children are able to articulate what it means to make good choices about behaviour, and to take responsibility for their part in their community.
 9. Staff share a collective responsibility for this area and work together to resolve any difficulties.
 10. The SLT model making good choices and staff and children reflect this.
 11. The Learning Ambassadors worked well on the Supply Teachers project and the suggestions raised from this have been implemented e.g. having Circle Time and ensuring teachers get to know the children if they have not taught in the school before.
 12. The younger children in particular have really embraced their role as Learning Ambassadors.
 13. Nursery children are very 'school-ready' as the same standards of behaviour apply across the whole school. Nursery children join in with other school experiences and know what is expected of them by the time they start Reception.

Challenges

1. The rate at which staff are required to address SEND needs.
2. Whilst staff have managed the behaviour and needs of children on the autistic spectrum very well, this has been at huge cost (both emotional and physical) to staff e.g. staff have been physically hurt, staff concerned that they have not done enough.
3. Older children are more passive regarding the role of Learning Ambassadors.

Next Steps

1. Encourage Year 6 children to be more positively engaged with the Learning Ambassador role.
2. Develop the role of Play Leaders and Sports Leaders – link with Soccer Schools to do this.

3. Quality of Teaching: The quality of teaching, specifically in maths and literacy and more generically through the wider curriculum, is effectively differentiated to meet the needs of all learners and excites, motivates and enthuses children to become self-directed, confident, independent and interdependent.

4. Achievement: All children's attainment and progress in English and maths improves through access to a rich curriculum with a clear focus on children taking a pro-active role – being architects of their own learning.

3:1 and 4:1

3.1 Teachers empower children to take greater responsibility for being autonomous learners; by setting their own targets, understanding their own next steps, being able to make and explain good learning choices and demonstrating ambition.

4.1 Children take greater responsibility for being autonomous learners by setting their own targets, understanding their own next steps, making and explaining good learning choices and demonstrating ambition.

The key focus of the past year has been creating a sense of ambition. This has had to be accelerated for some older children who may have been to several schools and have different ideas on what it means to be a good learner.

Successes

1. Celebrating uniqueness and individuality, and ensuring that children feel recognised for what they contribute.
2. Ensuring clear marking systems are in place and are understood by the children. Children understand what they need to do next and this is supported by teachers creating opportunities for children to reflect on what they have worked on to date. This understanding can be seen in the nursery as well as higher up the school, and can be articulated by even the youngest children.
3. As a result of the strong relationships staff have with children, implicit target setting happens through modelling and conversation, and is not just curricular.
4. Headteacher Awards are worded relating to effort to create a growth mindset.
5. The school is not hierarchical – staff are expected to be brave at having a go and not be afraid to fail in the same way that the children are asked to do.
6. Staff share a strength of belief in what they are doing, and that St. Martin's offers a different and special experience. Children comment that this is their experience of being at St. Martin's.
7. There is a strong culture of care – both teachers towards children and the reverse. There is a consistency of care and in the approach to this throughout the school.
8. Having excellent Higher Level Teaching Assistants means that sometimes they can manage classes and the school does not need to always employ supply teachers if needed.
9. Children are inspired and asked to continue their learning at home. The rich responses children have to this show that the children are able to engage with home-learning.

Challenges

1. Supply teaching can be challenging as the approach of these teachers may be different to St. Martin's expectations.

Next Steps

1. Ensure all new staff are involved in embedding this culture.
2. Send all supply staff the Learning Ambassador-produced document on how they can approach working at St. Martin's positively.
3. Send all supply staff a copy of the Health & Safety documentation.

3:2 and 4:2

3:2 Prioritising the development of 'book talk' across the school to include books, visual literacy and oral story telling.

4:2 Prioritising the development of 'book talk' across the school to include books, visual literacy and oral story telling. Book Talk to include an exploration of writer's choice of vocabulary, grammatical structure, imagery, use of inference, prediction, and justifying own opinions with increasing reference to the text.

Successes

1. Staff have undertaken a great deal of work on guided work and Talk for Reading and this has improved children's skills in understanding texts they read.
2. Teaching Assistants have received training on leading guided reading and intervention work.
3. The majority of Phase 2 and 3 Teaching Assistants have now also received inference training, which was undertaken to develop children's skills in interpreting texts.
4. Inference skills had clearly improved by the summer (shown in the KS2 data by the significant improvements in reading levels).
5. Children, especially boys, are demonstrating a real engagement with Project X.
6. The Accelerated Reader programme has been a great success, not only engaging the children but also providing them with opportunities to take ownership of their reading. The programme is also developing their love of books and creating a 'buzz' around reading.
7. The school has developed links with the Babcock Literacy team, and is hosting a network meeting for Devon subject leaders to share best practice.
8. In the five months since the AR programme was introduced, there is clear evidence of the impact it has had on progress – on average, children's reading has been accelerated by one month. In one class, the average reading age has accelerated by one year.
9. Children clearly aspire to achieve well in the book tests for their own sense of personal achievement.
10. The programme allows for quick and clear targeting of who needs support.
11. Tracey Stokes has put a huge amount of work into making the library ready for the AR programme. Children are using the library a great deal.

Challenges

1. To address how to ensure older children continue to find reading appealing and progress onto longer books, especially when engagement with Bug Club lessens.
2. Maintaining the excitement for the Accelerated Reader programme.
3. To consider the best ways for children to access the programme – some children become pre-occupied with the clock during the tests and this can mean that it can be necessary to check that their test results have been accurate.
4. Teaching children the skills to choose the appropriate book for their skill level.
5. The new curriculum gives more flexibility – need to ensure a real balance of genres of writing are taught and discussed.

Next steps

1. Develop inspiration through use of word count (having a target-o-meter to show how many have been read).
2. Encourage children to gain points for their Family Learning Groups through reading specific books.
3. Continue to improve inference and summarising skills.
4. Discuss and develop questioning skills further.
5. Consider moderation and writing in relation to the new curriculum.

6. Plan further training to further progress staff skills – look in depth at Talk for Writing, ensure staff consider and share different approaches.
7. Allow staff to expand on their skills creatively and independently.
8. Develop use of filming.
9. Staff to share good practice re guided reading/PPMs.

3:3 and 4:3

3:3 All teachers understand and adopt the mathematics teaching rationale developed by St Martin's which supports children through the use of concrete images to acquire the age appropriate knowledge and skills.

4:3 Children understand the importance of knowing key facts and they are able to demonstrate how this knowledge can be applied to solve unknown mathematical scenarios. Children are able to choose and use appropriate imagery to explain and develop their mathematical thinking.

Phase 1

Successes

1. The PPM process worked very well and identified strengths and next steps. It showed teachers different aspects to how their children's Maths skills, and how teaching and planning could be adjusted accordingly.
2. Mel Turl's recording and photos of the PPM process were very clear and provide evidence and a basis for future planning.
3. Funding has been agreed to purchase new Maths resources.
4. PPM records supported moderation training.
5. PPM process has enhanced and developed teachers' own practice.
6. Children's skills to talk about Maths has improved and they demonstrate an ability to explain their thinking clearly.
7. Mel Turl is creating excitement around learning Maths amongst both pupils and staff.
8. Maths inset training has had a huge impact upon the whole school.

Next steps

1. Embed Rising Stars curriculum
2. Use elicitation tasks as PPM
3. Develop Maths and Science within the wider curriculum and bring this up to the same level as Maths on its own.
4. Develop planning around use of groups.
5. Explore further the idea of risk taking, and it being okay not to know the answer immediately.
6. Children to be supported to help each other to identify the answers.

Phases 2 & 3

Successes

1. Support provided to other members of staff.
2. Areas of challenge have been identified.
3. Developing a better understanding of the number system.
4. Investment in Teaching Assistants 'Counting to Calculate' has made interventions more successful.

5. Maths training across the school for Teaching Assistants has been undertaken.

Challenges

1. SH has had too many commitments, which needs to be addressed next year.
2. Phases and classes have changed so it has not been possible to set up regular Phase meetings.
3. On-going challenge of ensuring new pupils are working at the level they need to be.
4. Curriculum changes have had a big impact.

Next Steps

1. Identified areas of challenge need to be prioritised.
2. Work with more staff to take on key roles and develop strategies.
3. Continue joint project planning with SCITT to develop Maths within schools. This will include how to make Maths inspirational, using video clips and considering how to make Maths 'real'.

5. Early Years Foundation Stage: All children through a rich and varied experience in the Foundation Stage are ready to move onto the next stage of their education.

5.1 To rapidly identify and successfully address specific barriers to learning for children in our setting and joining us from other settings throughout the year.

Successes

1. Specific observations are undertaken as children join, enabling an immediate assessment of any learning barriers. As a result, interventions are set up to address children's individual needs e.g. Fun Fit. These have had a very positive impact.
2. Language interventions have been provided. Teaching Assistants support the development of social skills and children have been able to form friendships as a result of this e.g. one child was very quiet and withdrawn, and was developmentally behind with their personal, social and emotional skills. They attended appropriate intervention groups and made huge steps forward, with support gradually adapted to meet their changing needs. The child is now very confident.
3. Children are used to working in different groups in different parts of the school so they are unaware that they are receiving intervention support.
4. Pupil reports are in depth, high quality and very moving, showing that the staff know the children very well.
5. Teri Payne and Emma Coles have been fantastic and have built really positive relationships with the children. As a whole, the EYFS team is very strong and work well together. SK has really risen to the challenges presented to her.

Challenges

1. The high number of new children – currently 96 children on the register (although this will decrease in the Autumn when the nursery is scaled back to how it was originally planned).

Next steps

1. Music therapy to be provided.

5.2 To increase the involvement and highly value the contribution of all parents in their child's learning journey.

Successes

1. Friday reflections – children are active in reflecting on their own journeys. Children discuss what they have enjoyed and what they want to get better at. These lead into possible lines of development.
2. Nursery end of term reflections week – parents welcome to come into Nursery to look at their work and talk about their children's learning.
3. WOW boards have led to greater input for sharing special moments with teachers. WOW cards are left out for parents to write on, and used as a basis for learning journeys.
4. Group meetings are held for parents as well as individual meetings. These meetings provide information as well as ideas on how parents can help their children e.g. the group Maths meeting for parents was well attended.

Challenges

1. Some parents focus too much on writing and reading capability – the challenge is to support them to understand that social and personal development is crucial.

Next steps

1. Reports to be sent out in line with the rest of the school to help parents feel more informed.
2. Outcomes sheets for children's Early Learning Goals to be produced.
3. A smaller cohort in Nursery will allow SK and the nursery staff to get to know the children even better.

5.3 To identify and support the more able learners in all areas with a particular emphasis on maths and technology to increase the percentage of children within the exceeding band.

Successes

1. An increase in the percentage of children in the 'exceeding' band has been achieved. As a result of the moderator's visit, staff are now clear how to present evidence of this.
2. Children have been challenged to demonstrate mastery in Maths, with PPMs used to plan this.
3. Children are able to use iPads to choose different apps, take photos and record stories.
4. Children are able to challenge themselves through maths equipment and iPads and will choose to talk about Maths without being adult-led.
5. Maths leadership has provided more ideas to teaching staff about challenging children in their maths learning.

Challenges

1. Some more able children can be hesitant to talk about their learning – this needs to be demonstrated to evidence mastery.

Next steps

1. Staff to support more hesitant children to take the risk and talk about their learning.

2. Foundation Stage to lead assembly a couple of times each term, to showcase what they have been learning. This can make a difference to the older children's expectations of themselves.
3. Use iPads to adapt apps and set challenges for children e.g. producing presentations (this will support development of mastery skills).