

Martins Wood Primary School

URN: 149330 | Inspected: 02 December 2025

Safeguarding

standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

Achievement

Expected standard

Overall, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, now achieve in line with their peers nationally. The school is successfully filling gaps in older pupils' reading, spelling and mathematics knowledge. Younger pupils gain the necessary reading knowledge, letter formation skills and understanding of number that they need for their future learning. Most pupils are now secure in their recall of the times tables. Pupils have a solid understanding of key knowledge across all curriculum subjects. This helps them to be ready for future learning at secondary school. Leaders rightly have a current focus on developing pupils' handwriting to ensure that they achieve more highly in writing overall. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make appropriate progress from their starting points, especially in reading and speech and language. However, for some pupils with SEND, the targets set for them, for example to help improve their writing, are sometimes not well matched to their needs and starting points. This hinders their progress.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

The school has recently updated the curriculum so it remains suitably ambitious and builds knowledge logically over time. Leaders make careful checks so that they know how well the curriculum is being taught. Staff are clear about the expectations of curriculum content and how best to teach it. Overall, staff are meeting these expectations well.

The school emphasises teaching pupils how to be confident readers, writers and mathematicians. Staff are well trained in these subjects. Staff successfully break down learning so that pupils are not overwhelmed by receiving too much knowledge at once. Pupils have the opportunity to rehearse new knowledge so that it sticks in their minds. If pupils need help to keep up, staff provide timely interventions. Adults adapt learning effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils enjoy the range of subjects they are taught, including from specialists, such as in physical education. Teachers provide pupils with helpful feedback on how to improve their work. They also check to see how well pupils have remembered what they have learned. However, in relation to pupils' writing, some of these checks on learning are not consistently informing

next steps

Martins Wood Primary School

URN: 149330 | Inspected: 02 December 2025

in teaching precisely enough. Therefore, some misconceptions remain or opportunities to extend pupils' writing knowledge and skills are not maximised.

Early years

Expected standard

Leaders ensure that the learning in early years is ambitious. Activities meet the specific needs of the children well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The curriculum is carefully designed so that knowledge across all areas of learning builds logically from age 2 upwards and through to the end of the Reception Year. Within early years, children access learning opportunities that are purposeful and suitably adapted for their stage of learning. This is especially apparent in staff use of the outside learning space. Typically, adults engage in conversations with children that help deepen their learning. Children also support each other well, for example by suggesting ideas to one another when they take part in role play or during construction activities. From the outset, reading and language development is prioritised. Staff ensure that children listen to familiar stories and share ambitious vocabulary. Staff check that children know the sounds that they need to read well and can apply this knowledge to their early writing. Staff place an appropriate focus on ensuring that children learn the importance of letter formation and are able to recognise numbers. Children learn how to sustain concentration, become independent and take turns. Overall, children leave the early years ready for Year 1. They are safe, busy and happy young learners.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders set clear expectations that all pupils will succeed, regardless of need or circumstance. Leaders rightly ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged have appropriate and targeted support so they can be fully involved in school life. The school has worked hard to put in place effective systems to accurately identify pupils' specific barriers to learning. These improvements have also benefited pupils with SEND whose needs were sometimes not identified in the past. Pupils now receive the help they need. Staff receive appropriate training to know how to support pupils with SEND. This helps pupils to learn successfully in class alongside their peers. Staff also take time and care to get to know all pupils' wishes and feelings so that they are better able to help them succeed at school. Leaders keep a close eye on how well the support for pupils with SEND or those who are disadvantaged is working. The school's chosen approaches result in most of these pupils making suitable progress from their starting points. Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding have benefited from the whole-school approach to improve pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. This approach includes identifying and closing gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Martins Wood Primary School

URN: 149330 | Inspected: 02 December 2025

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders have made significant improvements to the school, especially with regard to safeguarding, behaviour and the curriculum. They are unwavering in their drive to raise standards further. Leaders have considered staff wellbeing during this time of change, which staff appreciate. Leaders ensure that new staff settle in quickly and have the necessary support to improve pupils' learning. Staff value the coaching and professional development that leaders provide. The training for staff has helped to improve pupils' outcomes across the school and improve provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The trust provides clear oversight of the school. The school and the trust are not complacent. They have a clear understanding of what the

next steps

for the school's improvement journey are. Trustees have strengthened the school's governance arrangements. Governors are developing a clearer understanding of their role. Trustees are effective at holding school leaders to account and in meeting their statutory duties. They also seek further, external assurances about how well the school is performing. Leaders are very mindful of the need to continue to engage with parents and carers, including to gain their views about the quality of the school's ongoing work. Personal development and well-being Expected standard Pupils follow a well-thought-out personal development programme from pre-school upwards. They learn how to be kind and how to see other people's viewpoints. They know discrimination is wrong. They understand about how to stay safe, including how to deal with cyber-bullying, the dangers of drugs and how to carry out basic first aid. Pupils are encouraged to have healthy lifestyles. Events such as 'walk to school' week help to promote the benefits of exercise. Pupils learn about financial management, including from a visit by a national bank. They are taught how to have healthy relationships and about consent at an age-appropriate level. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures, especially those that they may not encounter every day in their local community. Their learning from the personal development programme prepares them well for life in a multicultural society. Pupils are starting to understand democracy through elections to their 'Pupil Parliament'. Some pupils have the opportunity to develop debating skills through the school's work with other schools. Pupils think of others through fundraising activities. The school provides effective care for pupils' wellbeing, including for its most vulnerable pupils. This care includes encouraging pupils to share their thoughts and feelings with staff, who then tailor their support more effectively. Opportunities to play sports and take part in musical performances help develop pupils' teamwork, resilience and self-confidence. In the early years, pupils develop their independence by looking after equipment, tidying up and putting their coats on for themselves. The school provides opportunities for leadership roles, such as being part of the sports 'crew' or being able to help younger pupils at breaktime. These roles help foster pupils' understanding of responsibility. Staff ensure that all pupils are able to benefit from the opportunities that are on offer. For example, they ensure that school clubs are accessible to everyone who wants to take part.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils talk very positively about their school. Recent changes that leaders have made ensure that pupils behave well, learn successfully and are kept safe. They make friends here and are well cared for by staff who are

Martins Wood Primary School

URN: 149330 | Inspected: 02 December 2025

ambitious for what they can achieve. Calm and orderly classrooms support pupils to learn well. Pupils play safely and happily together at social times. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively by staff should it arise. Children in the early years get off to a positive start to school and quickly settle into routines and their learning. In lessons, pupils try hard and find learning enjoyable. They value the support that they receive from adults if they find learning tricky. Pupils now achieve more successfully in reading, writing and mathematics. They leave school generally achieving in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. This helps to prepare them well for secondary school. Pupils with specific barriers to learning are also ably supported to access the curriculum. Pupils follow the school's values of 'be safe, be kind, keep trying'. They enjoy receiving medals and house points for demonstrating these values. Pupils share their views about school and influence decisions through ways such as the elected 'Pupil Parliament'. Pupils are polite, respectful and open to different viewpoints. They are encouraged to be kind and understanding. Pupils have opportunities to broaden their horizons by learning about other cultures and through being able to take part in visits, such as to the science centre and a residential. Music and sport play are important parts of school life. Older pupils are given opportunities to act as role models, for example being buddies to younger pupils. These opportunities help to improve pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers refine their assessment of pupils' writing so that their checks precisely inform pupils'

next steps

, address misconceptions and help pupils to achieve consistently highly.

- Leaders should continue their work to ensure that the targets that are set for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well matched to their needs and starting points, especially in pupils' writing.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Pupils like coming to school. They are usually on time and attend regularly. If any issues arise around attendance, leaders respond to these quickly. They work well with pupils and families to encourage pupils back into school. As a result, overall attendance is close to national averages and improving. Leaders analyse trends in attendance and find creative solutions to prevent repeat absences. Pupils understand why being at school every day is important. They are motivated by the class attendance award. Leaders' actions have led to significant improvements in how well pupils behave. This includes very effective work to reduce the number of instances of any unwelcome behaviour. Classrooms are now calm and orderly, meaning that pupils can learn without distraction. Most pupils sustain concentration well and recognise how much better behaviour is in the school. Pupils follow the school rules and when reminders are needed, these are consistently applied by staff and pupils heed them. Bullying is rare and is dealt with by staff effectively. Pupils know this, and it helps them to feel safe

Martins Wood Primary School

URN: 149330 | Inspected: 02 December 2025

and secure. Pupils who need help to manage their emotions use taught strategies well. These strategies support them to refocus and successfully return to class.

For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/martins-wood-primary-school-stevenage>