

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Vision

Our school is committed to bringing out the best in each other so that every member of the school community can know 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). Through learning of the teachings of Jesus, we believe that our children can explore and develop their understanding of core Christian values as markers and guides for their own lives.

We aim for the school's core Christian values to inform and influence our pupils' moral compass and allow them to enjoy 'life in all its fullness'. These values are known as the 'Sunshine 6'. They are: Forgiveness, Perseverance, Honesty, Compassion, Courage and Respect.

St Mary's Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The deeply embedded Christian vision is the driving force for leaders' actions. This directly benefits the pupils and adults in the school enabling them to grow, leading to opportunities to flourish.
- The innovative curriculum is highly effective in ensuring pupils experience the joy of learning and achieve well.
- Leaders and staff are aspirational for pupils and work diligently to ensure barriers to learning are removed. As a result, the words of the vision are a lived experience, with pupils able to 'live life in all its fullness'.
- High quality support provided by leaders enhances religious education (RE). This enriches pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of worldviews and faiths, including Christianity.
- The school's relationship with the local church and clergy is strong. This partnership is highly valued by the community, strengthening the Christian ethos and the effectiveness of this as a Church school.

Development Points

- Enhance opportunities for pupils to challenge injustice independently through deepening their sense of personal responsibility to others. This is so they can make a positive difference to the lives of others within and beyond school.
- Enhance the breadth of the RE curriculum to ensure pupils gain a deeper understanding of diversity within faith groups.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision at St Mary's is 'up front and central' in every aspect of the life of this distinctive Church school. Inspired by the teachings of Jesus, leaders, including governors, are inspirational in their commitment to ensuring the vision is a lived reality. In doing so, they create an inclusive environment where their diverse school community can experience 'life in all its fullness'. The vision is expressed through deeply embedded Christian values, known as the 'sunshine six'. These are understood by pupils and adults and form the foundation of strong relationships. Consequently, they foster a deep sense of belonging. Staff consistently model the vision and values in their daily work. This results in a dynamic and stimulating environment where the academic, social and spiritual growth of pupils is nurtured. Governors are tenacious in their support for school. They work alongside leaders to reflect on the impact of the vision, ensuring that it drives their decisions. One example is the high-quality, personalised induction programme designed to support new staff as they integrate into the St Mary's community. This creates a positive climate where staff feel valued and exemplifies leaders' commitment to 'bringing out the best in everyone.'

The flourishing of individuals is central to St Mary's approach to wellbeing. Staff work diligently to ensure the welfare and success of pupils. The recently extended pastoral team plays a vital role in advocating for pupils, providing valued support to families. This creates a nurturing environment and improves pupils' ability to achieve positive outcomes. Individuals feel connected and supported which strengthens wellbeing. Through a range of leadership roles, pupils are involved in actively promoting the wellbeing of others. The 'sunshine crew' provides peer mediation for those experiencing friendship difficulties and through the anti-bullying programme pupils act as guardians for peers. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure in school, confident that they have a voice.

Extensive research underpins a curriculum which is both inspirational and innovative. Care is taken to provide high quality learning experiences which enable pupils, including those deemed vulnerable, to live 'life in all its fullness'. There is a clear understanding of barriers to learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This underpins the personalised approach to teaching and is a reflection of the vision. Lessons are planned in clear sequences, designed to build confidence and empower pupils. As a result, pupils thrive academically. Spiritual flourishing is at the heart of the curriculum. This reflects leaders' firm belief that it is essential to the development of the whole child. Spirituality is expressed through four words: belief, values, community and relationships. These are well-known and understood by pupils and adults. Regular exploration of these dimensions encourages pupils to reflect deeply on matters of personal significance, fostering their spiritual growth.

Leaders' keen awareness of the importance of social issues ensures it is a key element of the school curriculum. Pupils explore big questions relating to topics from the past and the present. In doing so they develop a deepening understanding of the richness and diversity of the world they live in. Exciting and relevant key questions such as 'does history remember everyone fairly?' engage pupils in meaningful reflection. These questions promote an understanding of justice and inequality. Pupils believe that topics help them 'to know what's most important' and inspire them 'to do great things'. As a result, they develop a passion for social issues and understand the importance of speaking up for others. Pupils demonstrate great enthusiasm for school-led initiatives like the 'village drills' project, which provides communities in Africa with clean water. In doing so they live out their vision, helping others to experience 'life in all its fullness'. However, the way pupils apply the skills learnt to help them make a difference to the lives of others is less developed. This limits its impact on those within and beyond the school.



Worship at St Mary's is a meaningful expression of the school's Christian vision. With the support of clergy, leaders have developed a worship programme that reflects both the school's inclusive ethos and its Anglican heritage. A consistent structure forms the foundation of collective worship. This enriches pupils' awareness of the different ways in which people worship. A reverential atmosphere is evident at the beginning of worship. Pupils value this for the sense of calm which it instils in them. An inclusive approach invites pupils and staff to engage in prayer, reflection and singing if they so wish. Through the exploration of Christian values and biblical texts, pupils gain an understanding of the life of Jesus. These teachings are meaningfully connected to pupils' own experiences, provoking deep thinking. Class worship provides opportunities for further discussion and reflection whilst also addressing the school's drive for active learning. Strong partnerships enhance the worship experience for the community. Representatives from the diocese and local churches offer a rich variety of viewpoints and in doing so deepen spiritual growth. The inclusive and accessible nature of worship is valued by parents, who enjoy attending celebration worship. These experiences strengthen relationships and contribute to the flourishing of adults. The partnership with St Mary's Church enhances the worship life of the school. Pupils see church as a safe place, where they 'feel Jesus' presence'. Parents appreciate the warm welcome they receive. Half termly services, planned with the pupils, are meaningful and contribute to spiritual growth. Prayers read by pupils in different languages deeply move parents and contribute to their spiritual flourishing. They appreciate the 'backpack' service as it puts families at ease and fosters a sense of belonging. This is a compelling example of how the strong partnership between the school and church enriches the spiritual life of the community.

The RE curriculum is well-sequenced and reflects both the foundation of the school and the diverse community it serves. Through appropriately selected content, pupils explore a variety of beliefs, ideas and perspectives. This supports them in their understanding of a range of religions and worldviews. Pupils successfully engage with religious texts and big questions are utilised to support their understanding of key concepts within Christianity. However, work on differences within faith groups is not as embedded. This limits the depth of pupils' understanding of diversity.

RE is highly prioritised through leaders' belief that it is an essential part of realising their vision. There is a strong commitment to ensure teaching and learning is of the highest quality. Robust monitoring by leaders and governors informs development plans and shapes training opportunities. Support from the diocese and clergy is valued and deepens staff knowledge. Dedicated time is provided for staff to plan together and share expertise. As a result, staff are confident in the delivery of lessons. Regular assessment opportunities inform teaching and ensure that pupils are supported and challenged. Teachers make use of 'deeper thinking' questions to extend learning. These enable pupils to reflect further on issues of faith and to apply their learning in their own lives. Prompts such as pictorial representations support pupils with SEND to access these questions. In doing so it takes away barriers to learning, enhancing their active involvement in lessons. As a result, RE makes a significant contribution to the flourishing of pupils.

Information

Address	Lodge Hill Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6NU		
Date	03 February 2025	URN	103410
Type of school	voluntary aided	No. of pupils	413
Diocese/District	Birmingham		
Headteacher	Bruce Warland		
Co chairs of Governors	Joanne Mason and David Leigh		
Inspector	Marcia Harris		