

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Chipping Norton</b>	
Address	The Green, Chipping Norton, OX7 5DH
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Good

School's vision
Through inspirational teaching and an environment of nurture and support, our school will develop the whole child supported by St. Mary's Christian foundation. All children will develop enthusiasm for learning and resilience for life. They will demonstrate aspirations for the future by positively understanding their worth and potential. Our vision has its roots in Isaiah 64:8 You lord are the father, We are the clay, You are the potter; We are all the work of your hand.
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders are in the process of reviewing the theologically rooted Christian vision and associated values. Governors know their school well, however, a robust system of monitoring St Mary's as a Church school is underdeveloped.</li> <li>• Plentiful opportunities for spiritual development are harnessed, but pupils' academic flourishing is not as effective. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could, as the curriculum is not always ambitious enough.</li> <li>• The school and parish church are exceptionally strong partners within the community. This collaboration significantly enhances the wellbeing and nurture of pupils and families.</li> <li>• Inclusive worship effectively reflects the vision and associated values. It raises the aspirations of everyone by empowering those present to reflect upon the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.</li> <li>• Religious education (RE) makes a positive contribution to flourishing. Good teaching in RE ensures pupils develop knowledge and understanding of major religions and worldviews.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the theologically rooted Christian vision is the driving force at the heart of the school's policy and practice.</li> <li>• Enable pupils to flourish academically across an ambitious curriculum which is shaped by the firm foundation of the school's vision.</li> <li>• Empower governors to effectively monitor St Mary's as a Church school within a robust system of self-evaluation.</li> </ul>

## Inspection findings

With great integrity, the new headteacher affirms staff to reinforce a desire for pupils and adults to flourish. All leaders rightly identify the opportunity to refresh the theologically rooted Christian vision. Whilst the existing vision is well-embedded, during the process of renewal, pupils are sometimes muddled by the changing language. Leaders are beginning to implement the new vision across policy and practice. Governors are dedicated to the school they serve. However, a robust system for monitoring the impact of the vision is underdeveloped. As a result, governors do not always hold staff to account for the academic flourishing of pupils. School leaders are determined to improve academic outcomes whilst maintaining the exceptional culture of nurturing pupils and adults. Strong partnerships within the school community effectively cement relationships that are built on mutual trust and honesty. Leaders take counsel from the Diocese in reviewing the vision. This support and additional training are well utilised in strategic planning and within the development of RE and collective worship.

Adults understand their role as the potter who helps to shape and model the rounded education of the pupils. This is built from the existing vision. Leaders use consultation with pupils, parents, and staff to gauge opinion and contribute towards the next steps of school improvement. There is a clear sense of growth underpinned by the Christian vision. The way the St Mary's curriculum reflects the revised vision is underdeveloped. Consequently, it is not challenging enough for some pupils and academic achievement is low. Leaders are acutely aware of this and are tackling it head-on. The spiritual needs of pupils and adults are well-catered for within a shared understanding of spiritual development. Opportunities for spiritual growth and moments of awe and wonder are richly provided. Pupils enjoy exciting extra-curricular opportunities, for instance, a large choir, that supports their personal and spiritual development. These enable pupils to participate in local community events, such as sports festivals and singing for local care homes.

Fundamental to flourishing is the lasting partnership between St Mary's school and Church. Parish volunteers and clergy focus much energy on supporting the needs of the diverse school community. The church's nurturing of pupils, active support for families and prayerful care for the whole school community is exceptionally strong. Securing good mental health and wellbeing for pupils and adults is paramount to leaders. Overtime, systems have enabled pupils to flourish because support is abundant for those considered to be vulnerable. St Mary's Church offer positive assistance and intervention for families. This has far reaching benefits to the wellbeing of many people in the community. The parish fund many resources to enhance wellbeing and the good mental health of pupils and adults. Pupils have high aspirations because of the staff's dedication to support them pastorally. A sense of growing together from the firm foundation of the Christian vision permeates.

The character and moral development of pupils directly grows from the vision. This inspires pupils and adults, giving hope for the community. It is most evident when circumstances are difficult. The school ensures that pupils develop resilience and do not give up on their dreams of success. Charitable engagement is poignant to many at St Mary's and local causes are often the focus of fundraising. The school council relishes planning social action projects for a variety of causes. Pupils know that they are taking action to improve the lives of others in their community as well as beyond. Pupils learn to challenge injustice with support from staff. Leaders are sensitive that some pupils considered to be vulnerable may benefit directly from these efforts. This balance is carefully managed to ensure everyone can be included in fundraising for good causes.

St Mary's is a happy community where pupils and adults learn and live together well. Pupil's


behaviour is good, and they understand the consequences of their actions and how these are underpinned by Christian values. Incidents of bullying and racism are rare. Policies and practices are rooted in forgiveness and reconciliation. Staff act as powerful role models of this to pupils. Recently, attendance has significantly improved thanks to leaders' drive for all to flourish. School is a safe place and pupils look forward to each day.

Difference is embraced fully at St Mary's. Consequently, pupils and adults flourish because they are treated with dignity and respect. A considered personal, social and health education curriculum is underpinned by the vision. As a result, pupils learn to form positive relationships with one another. Diversity is represented in resources across the curriculum and by the celebration of the different cultural heritage within the community.

Opportunities for inclusive prayer are woven across the life of the school. Invitational prayer is the norm. This contributes to a calm and reflective environment at St Mary's. All pupils, including those of Muslim backgrounds feel welcome to engage in collective worship alongside their friends. A multitude of experiences are evident to enable pupils and adults to grow spiritually. A group of pupils support staff and clergy in planning, leading, and evaluating acts of worship. Diocesan training is utilised to develop good practices. Services taking place in the church are often constructed and led by pupils. Strong partnerships with local congregations enhance the pupils' understanding of the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. Leaders facilitate worship that explores Christian values in imaginative ways. Pupils have a clear understanding of the Christian idea of the Holy Trinity, noticing and articulating the work of the Holy Spirit within the school. Whilst distinctively Christian, worship is fully inclusive. Pupils demonstrate an impressive knowledge of the Bible and make explicit links between their lives and the stories they hear.

Leaders have developed an engaging curriculum for RE. It is effective in ensuring pupils flourish through good provision. The curriculum effectively ensures that RE expresses the school's Christian vision. This supports pupils' exploration of theology, philosophy, and human science. Subsequently, they develop age-appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis, and interpretation. Training is shared with all teachers. Effective partnerships with the Diocesan Board of Education positively impact the quality of RE. The skilled subject leader has thoughtfully selected units of work to fit the school's mixed-year group classes. Class RE books are used to showcase the knowledge acquired by pupils alongside their individual work. Interactive displays promote critical thinking and celebrate diversity. Older pupils understand the importance of studying world religions and how their learning prepares them for life in modern Britain. Assessment systems enable teachers to scaffold learning so all can flourish in RE.

St Mary's provides firm foundations and creates opportunities for everyone to be inspired and flourish within a supportive community.

	The effectiveness of RE is		Good	
	Through monitoring, leaders' assessment of RE teaching and learning is accurate. Leaders take account of up-to-date thinking and developments in RE and select parts of this to improve RE provision. In lessons, pupils make good progress and work is of a good standard. Tailored support enables those considered to be vulnerable to achieve well in RE. Units of work on world religions and worldviews are detailed and enable pupils to flourish in their learning.			
Information				
School	St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Chipping Norton	Inspection date	22 May 2023	
URN	123227	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	
Diocese/District	Oxford	Pupils on roll	197	
Headteacher	Christine McQueen			
Chair of Governors	Steve Nelson			
Inspector	Toby Long	No.	896	