

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Deane	
Address	Edale Road, Deane, BL3 4QP
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	Requires Improvement

School's vision
Our school is a place of Christian values where children learn to show respect, are responsible, accountable, fair, honest and courageous, have empathy, persevere, show initiative and optimism and act with integrity. They achieve their fullest potential and are well equipped to meet the challenges of education, work and life.
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inclusive and aspirational Christian vision is deeply embedded in school life, enabling all pupils and adults to flourish. The biblical roots of the vision are not fully understood by the school community. • Shaped by the school's Christian vision, the creatively designed curriculum meets the diverse needs of all pupils. Staff tirelessly champion equality of opportunity and wellbeing, enabling all pupils to flourish in their learning. • Shaped by the language of the school's Christian vision, character development permeates every aspect of school life. Pupils care generously for each other and the world. They have limited opportunities to engage in social action projects that challenge injustice. • Collective worship is inclusive and invitational. However, inconsistent planning and guidance too often result in an insufficient focus on biblical teaching. • The religious education (RE) curriculum is well-planned and balanced in meeting the needs of this diverse school. Pupils develop a comprehensive, respectful understanding of Christianity and a range of world religions and worldviews.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify further the theological roots of the school's Christian vision. This is so the school community better understands how biblical teaching underpins the life and work of the school. • Improve guidance and planning for collective worship to routinely include biblical teaching. This is so pupils understand the Bible's impact on inspiring the lives of believers. • Engage pupils in social action projects so they understand how they can challenge injustice by being agents for change.



Inspection findings

St Mary's is a good Church school, serving the needs of its diverse and vibrant community with Christian generosity and hope. The school's Christian vision and values are deeply cherished and underpin the work of this inclusive, aspirational and successful Church school. The welcoming and attractive school environment proudly celebrates the many rich and varied ways that adults and pupils flourish. The school serves a community often facing social and economic challenge. In response, leaders committedly uphold the Christian vision as the foundation for all their work. However, although leaders describe how the Christian message spearheads their approach, the theological roots for the vision are not sufficiently defined. As a result, the school community does not fully understand how biblical teaching underpins school priorities, policies and development planning. Hardworking governors actively contribute to school life. They have a secure understanding of their monitoring role.

The Christian vision of enabling all pupils to achieve their fullest potential inspires a creative and ambitious curriculum. Underpinned by the school's Christian values, lessons are thoughtfully crafted to provide a rich range of targeted learning, equipping pupils for life. Opportunities to study aspects of spirituality are skilfully woven through lessons. Imaginative topics, such as exploring different views on the creation of the universe with older pupils, inspire deep reflection and curiosity. Showing perseverance, curiosity and initiative in lessons are celebrated with rewards, demonstrating how pupils routinely reflect on learning and life. As a result, pupils are knowledgeable about a wide range of issues. They have a good understanding of their place in the world.

Deeply committed Christian leadership underpins a profound commitment to embrace the many new families arriving from overseas. Parents and carers recognise the school's tireless dedication to inclusion. 'We are all made to feel welcome,' said one parent. 'The staff are always there for us.' In addition, the local community has been disproportionately hit by the long-term effects of the COVID pandemic. A significant number of children arrive in school with delayed language and social development. In response, leaders make boldly ethical decisions to target resources to ensure all pupils achieve their fullest potential. The school has installed a significant range of adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Highly skilled support staff make effective use of carefully designed spaces in school, such as a fully equipped sensory room. This ensures vulnerable pupils' needs are fully met. As a result of the thoughtfully tailored curriculum and dedicated, effective teaching and resources, all pupils flourish in their learning.

The language of the school's Christian vision permeates deeply through school life and has a significant impact on pupils' character development. Pupils are respectful, honest and optimistic. They learn and play harmoniously together. The Christian vision of empathy and respect inspires a school community that prioritises mental health. Leaders nurture adult wellbeing, generously empowering staff in their personal and professional development. As a result, staff are resilient and optimistic, linking high aspirations to their Church school distinctiveness. Led by committed and effective pastoral staff, trained pupil wellbeing ambassadors provide regular one to one support for fellow pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe and trust each other. 'It's important to have empathy for each other,' said one pupil. 'Talking makes your worries go away.' Pupils are courageous advocates for one another, showing demonstrable respect for each other's diverse backgrounds and beliefs. Inspired by the school vision of fairness, they understand and respond compassionately to inequality and injustice. Often in partnership with the local church, the school is active in a range of charitable activities, particularly locally. Pupils proactively champion initiatives supporting vulnerable people within the community. Opportunities for pupils to make a greater



difference by engaging in social action projects is underdeveloped.

Spurred by the Christian vision of respect and integrity, leaders work hard to engage their multi-faith community inclusively within collective worship. Anglican traditions, including singing, lighting candles, reflection and prayer create a daily space for an invitational encounter with God. Pupils actively engage in collective worship by leading prayers, enthusiastic singing and presenting their thoughts on worship themes. Many pupils attend and joyfully contribute to regular church services, whilst leaders sensitively cater for pupils who do not attend. Leaders ensure a range of religious festivals are marked by school events. Pupils and families welcome activities celebrating Eid and Diwali, for example, as well as Christmas and Easter. The school's invitational approach has a significant impact on bringing this diverse community harmoniously together, within a culture of mutual respect.

The school's Christian vision shapes collective worship themes. Weekly acts of worship led by local clergy creatively explore biblical teachings linked to Christian values. Here pupils reflect meaningfully on the impact of Bible stories on their own lives, leading to spiritual growth. For example, the story of Daniel in the lion's den sparked thoughtful responses on courage and respect. During the rest of the week, teachers lead worship. Here a lack of guidance and planning leads to an insufficient focus on biblical teaching. This inhibits pupils' understanding of how their school vision is rooted in the Bible and how the teachings of Jesus are relevant in today's world. As a result, opportunities for collective worship to inspire spontaneous prayer and reflection are limited. Pupils contribute and evaluate worship, though their contribution to planning and leading worship are underdeveloped.

RE is a strength of the school. The curriculum is well-planned, creative and sequential. Skilful links with other subjects strengthen pupils' understanding of Christianity and a range of world religions and worldviews. For example, studying the architecture of sacred buildings in art innovatively enriches pupils' understanding of religious symbolism. Pupils enthusiastically share aspects of their own faith in lessons, further deepening pupils' knowledge of world religions. RE is highly effective in exploring the theological basis for the school's Christian values. For example, older pupils link the value of perseverance with Jesus' courage when he died on the cross. RE lessons are carefully tailored to meet the needs of all pupils. Targeted adult support and resources enable all to be fully included. As a result, pupils enjoy RE, engage actively and flourish in their learning.

St Mary's is a values-led and aspirational Church school. Leaders passionately uphold its Christian vision, serving its richly diverse community with integrity and compassion, including through challenging times. This enables all pupils and adults to flourish, full of optimism for their future.



Information			
School	St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Deane	Inspection date	2 February 2023
URN	105203	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Manchester	Pupils on roll	481
Headteacher	Diane Jeffries		
Chair of Governors	David Hawksworth		
Inspector	Sue Mawdsley	No.	930