

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Mortimer St John's Church of England Infant School	
Address	West End Road, Mortimer, Reading, RG7 3SY
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

School's vision
<p>At Mortimer St John's Infant School we will live and celebrate 'life in all its fullness' by taking every opportunity, both in and out of school life, to achieve our best and find ways to 'Share Your Light'.</p> <p>John 10:10</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision reflects the strength of the new Mortimer federation of two schools. Pupils, staff and leadership benefit from shared opportunities to develop experiences, skills and provision. • The supportive governing body gives careful consideration to the vision in decision making. However, monitoring of the school as a Church school does not focus sufficiently on impact. • Shaped by the school's vision, a creative curriculum provides rich learning opportunities, enabling pupils to flourish. Opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum are not systematically identified in planning. • Collective worship, springing from the Christian vision, is valued and affirming. It influences the lives of both pupils and staff, enabling them to flourish. Worship is enriched by opportunities for leadership by the older pupils. • Strong leadership of religious education (RE) ensures that the subject is taught with enthusiasm. Pupils experience creative, thought-provoking lessons. Practical opportunities to understand and respect difference and diversity are developing.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish systems to capture the impact of the vision so that it more explicitly drives improvements and the ongoing development of the school as a Church school. • Extend opportunities to identify spirituality within curriculum planning. This is to enhance spiritual flourishing for all. • Explore ways for all pupils to deepen their knowledge of a range of faiths and worldviews to increase their understanding of difference and diversity.



Inspection findings

Since the last inspection, the school has amalgamated with Mortimer St Mary's Junior School to become part of a federation within Mortimer village. Shared subject leadership, common resources and joint meetings on strategic direction are all benefits of the collaboration between the two schools. Stirred by the words in John 10, the whole community has been given a renewed impetus to 'share their light'. The theme of the vision captures the imagination of the young pupils and is readily understood by them. There is a sense of togetherness, with a focus on nurturing the individual in order to unlock their potential. This connects palpably to the vision that everyone should have life in all its fullness. Partnerships are strong and include beneficial links with the Diocese, the local church and the neighbouring community. Governors are passionate about their role in supporting the school. They clearly articulate the biblical understanding which upholds the school's vision. A deep awareness of this is reflected in making wise, ambitious spending decisions. This includes providing extensive provision for vulnerable pupils, supporting staff to develop professionally and renewing the curriculum. This has a positive impact, enabling flourishing because of the highly supportive environment. Governors carry out monitoring and evaluation visits to observe collective worship and RE. However, monitoring of the vision and the school as a Church school is not of a robust or strategic nature. Respect, resilience and aspiration are the school's core Christian values. These can be seen in action in the everyday life of the school.

The refreshed and reinvigorated curriculum encourages confidence and ambition, making pupils curious about the wider world. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs are carefully supported to develop and thrive. As a result, they, too, are given opportunities to 'share their light'. An international link to a school in India, brings a global dimension to the curriculum. The intentional planning of spiritual opportunities within the curriculum is, however, underdeveloped.

Pupils have positive aspirations and all are eco warriors who are passionate about the environment. Eco leaders reflect on the importance of social actions, such as litter picking on the village common and helping to support the West Berkshire foodbank. They take part with enthusiasm in environmental projects such as planting trees, making compost and recycling pens. This has led to achieving the Eco Schools Green Flag Award. Involvement in these activities means that pupils recognise that they can be advocates for social change. Annual enterprise and aspiration weeks give pupils the confidence to be resilient and entrepreneurial. The new curriculum builds pupils' experience of diversity, although this is an area to develop further.

Wellbeing is prioritised with staff actively promoting good mental health. Initiatives such as therapeutic thinking and Space Makers, a mindfulness resource, help pupils to develop strategies to cope with life's difficulties. As a result of a restorative approach to disagreements, behaviour is good and pupils are respectful and happy at school. Staff are supported in their wellbeing. They particularly appreciate the many opportunities to grow their leadership talents both in this school and beyond. As a result, they feel valued and nurtured by the school leadership. Staff morale is therefore high. Support extends to parents and families, who speak warmly about the care they receive from the school. Pupils show compassion for the wider world by taking part in fund raising for charities, sometimes selected by themselves. These include the Lent Mission, the World Wildlife Fund and Crisis. They are beginning to recognise social injustice through the curriculum. For instance, recent projects about Mary Seacole and Katherine Johnson give pupils an insight into social injustice. A visit to the Titanic exhibition at the Seacity Museum in Southampton left a lasting effect on

pupils. This is because they experienced the plight of steerage passengers aboard the Titanic.

Collective worship, flowing from the Christian vision, is highly valued by the whole school community. It is carefully planned to include liturgical features appropriate for the school's young age group. Year 2 worship leaders value opportunities to lead and evaluate worship. They relish the lighting of the candles to symbolise that they are sharing their light. By using drama, music and a range of media, worship is interactive, creative and memorable. This promotes discussion and thinking about how ideas in worship link to their own actions. Enthusiastic singing enhances worship. Visiting the local church for celebrations and worship creates a sense of awe and wonder that is valued by both pupils and parents. As a result, they are familiar with the cycle of the church's year. Good use is made of the beautiful grounds, with lessons and worship often being held in the outdoor reflection area. This enables pupils to experience the world around them in thought, prayer or quiet reflection. Opportunities for prayer throughout the school day help to develop spiritual growth.

The effective RE leader, who works in both schools, has introduced a well-planned and engaging RE curriculum. This has been implemented enthusiastically by the staff. It balances the teaching of Christianity with world faiths effectively. Pupils find their lessons lively and interesting. This is because the creative lessons demand a range of responses. Consequently, pupils who have talent in RE but have difficulties with writing, still achieve well. Class 'floor books' demonstrate thoughtful responses made by pupils to their learning. These go through to the next school, ensuring continuity and act as reminders of prior learning and progression. Impressive classroom displays provide a stimulating environment, promoting learning. Leaders recognise the need for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of diversity and world religions .

Fortified by its three core values of aspiration, respect and resilience, Mortimer St John's enables everyone to 'share their light'.

Information			
School	Mortimer St John's Church of England Infant School	Inspection date	13 June 2023
URN	109978	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Oxford	Pupils on roll	173
Executive Headteacher / Head of School	Clare Beswick / Gemma Rook		
Chair of Governors	Craig Hassey		
Inspector	Jenny Earp	No.	288