

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address Buckingham Road, Cadishead, Manchester M44 5HG

Christian vision

Beginning the lifelong journey of learning.

Providing a stimulating and supportive Christian environment which enables each child to fulfil their potential academically, socially and spiritually.

Love, hope, forgiveness and equality.

School strengths

- Leaders know the community and the specific needs of pupils and families very well. The carefully chosen foundational Christian values address those needs and run as a thread throughout the life of the school. The values impact positively on learning and relationships, leading to the flourishing of pupils and adults.
- St Mary's is a vibrant worshipping community. Leaders, staff and pupils contribute confidently and grow spiritually in collective worship.
- The effectiveness of St Mary's as a Church school is greatly enhanced by strong, mutually beneficial partnerships. The relationship with both lay and clergy members of the local Church, is particularly rich and strong.
- Pupils and adults are well supported by the provision of high-quality resources to develop good mental health and wellbeing. As a result, people are treated well in a safe, supportive environment. This enables all to learn, work and flourish.
- Despite the recent long-term absence of a key member of staff, provision of effective high quality religious education (RE) has remained a priority. RE is greatly valued as an academic subject, enjoyed by both teachers and pupils.

Areas for development

- Build on current good practice by establishing a shared understanding and language of spirituality. This is so that development opportunities can be utilised across the whole curriculum.
- Expand the scope and scale of activities for pupils to develop as agents of change to include national and global communities.
- Ensure that RE monitoring activities include evaluation of the practice observed. This is to ensure that leaders and teachers know what to do to improve the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Inspection findings

St Mary's is a highly effective Church school at the heart of its community. Leaders know and understand the lived experience of the people they serve. They have developed an aspirational vision, expressed as four carefully chosen Christian values, to meet the needs of pupils and their families. As a result, the school provides high quality learning, care and support built on the foundation of God's love for all. Pupils and adults are able to flourish because all are included and given equal opportunity to learn and grow. Understanding of biblical teaching about each of the chosen values is developed over time. Key bible verses linked to each class help contribute to this knowledge. The governing board has made significant funding decisions guided by the school's values. Staffing and accommodation have been provided to support the wellbeing of the whole

school community. Parents, staff and pupils value this hugely, one saying ‘the school would fall apart if we didn’t have the nurture room’. The culture of inclusion and hope characterises all activity. Regular pupil surveys provide evidence of the positive impact of the Christian values on behaviour, inclusion, spiritual development and learning. Staff work closely as a cohesive team, supporting each other professionally and personally.

The curriculum has been carefully designed to meet the needs of all. Pupils are excited by their learning and appreciate the variety of methods teachers use to explain and motivate. There is clear intention within the planning for each subject to overcome identified barriers to learning. This is informed by the school’s Christian values and vision. Adjustments are made to the curriculum when necessary to make learning accessible to all. This has enabled those with complex needs to remain in mainstream school for the whole of their primary education. Parents value the way in which leaders listen to concerns and work hard to provide what is needed for individual pupils. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These opportunities enable pupils to flourish as they explore new arts, skills and sports. Pupils recognise the importance of constant challenge, knowing that, with support, they can take their next steps. Staff make time for reflection and encourage spiritual development in many lessons across the curriculum. However, a consistent, shared understanding and language of spirituality are not yet fully embedded.

Collective worship is an integral part of the life of the school. As a result of careful planning for whole school and class worship, pupils and adults grow in their understanding of biblical teaching. The school ‘creed’ and four Christian values are repeated regularly, keeping them as a central focus for everyone. Time is provided for guided reflection and prayerful response to themes and events. Dedicated spaces and displays in each classroom serve as an accessible and creative focal point. Pupils are proud to be chosen for the worship team and contribute confidently to planning and leading. Worship is enhanced by a very strong relationship with clergy and lay members of the local church. They run popular toddler and Sunday school groups and help with the celebration of Christian festivals. Regular visits to the Church building support learning in RE. The Church council regularly considers school issues and, through very active foundation governors, seeks opportunities to increase their support. This included the decision to run a toddler group in the school as well as the Church, extending the support to more families.

Leaders have developed a highly effective culture of care for pupils, adults and the wider community. The Christian values of love, hope and equality are lived out daily in the priority given to inclusion and wellbeing. Activities based around the nurture room support all members of the school community. Pupils are helped with regulation of behaviour and are given time and space to discuss and restore relationships. Adults receive high levels of support for positive mental health and wellbeing. The services of external agencies are used to ensure specialist help is provided in an effective and timely manner. As a result of the high-profile focus on wellbeing, pupils and adults are confident in themselves and able to contribute. This impacts positively on behaviour and contributes to a welcoming, nurturing community. Older pupils joining the school benefit from this authentic culture, feeling immediately valued, included and able to settle quickly.

The core values of equality and hope encourage pupils to look beyond their own needs. Within school, opportunities are provided for taking on roles that help others. The team of ‘wellbeing champions’ model the empathy and actions expected of everyone. Each Year 4 cohort completes the ‘Archbishop’s Young Leaders’ Award’. This provides character development, training in leadership and opportunities for making a difference to the local community. Once trained, older pupils continue to build on the encouragement they have had to believe they can make a difference. Many act on their own initiative to identify needs and complete projects to improve lives in the local area. This programme is an effective way for pupils to learn how to make ethical choices and improve their community. However, the scope and scale of this work has yet to expand to include national and global priorities.

The RE curriculum is based on the local syllabus but has been adapted well to meet the needs of the school. Units of work are enquiry based, providing scope for discussion and pupils to reflect on their own ideas and beliefs. RE has a high priority as an academic subject. Printed summaries of the content of each unit of work are used effectively to support pupil understanding and teacher assessment. There is a good balance of approaches covering the thoughts, belief and practices in the religions and worldviews studied. Lessons are led with sensitivity to ensure that pupils feel safe to express their thoughts and personal responses. Leaders have ensured that RE continues to be effective, despite the long-term absence of a key member of staff.

Members of the governing board monitor the provision of RE through lesson visits and work scrutiny. However, the evaluation of these activities does not yet impact on the effectiveness of the curriculum. The impact of St Mary's as an effective Church school is due to leaders' commitment to following the example of Jesus. This is enhanced by the support of a strong governing board and vibrant church community. As a result, the aspirational Christian values flow through the daily life of the school, enabling all to flourish.

Through its vision and practice, St Mary's Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information

School	St Mary's Church of England Primary School				
URN	105936	Pupils on roll	225	VA/VC/Academy	VC
Diocese	Manchester				
Multi academy trust	n/a				
Federation	n/a				
Headteacher	Jo McGarry				
Chair of governors	Alan Langdon				
Inspector	Peter Barfoot		No.	2216	
Date of Inspection	12 September 2023				