

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Shrewsbury Mereside Church Of England Primary Academy

Address Mereside, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY2 6LE

Christian vision

Underpinned by the core Christian value of love, our school's vision is to be at the heart of our community: supporting all within it to aspire and flourish. We strive to be caring global citizens who value and celebrate diversity, whilst being good neighbours to all. We take inspiration from the words of Jesus:

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” (John 13:34).

Therefore, we **Learn to love, love to learn**. We live out love through our values of:

Community Wisdom Hope Dignity Joy Peace

School strengths

- Leaders clearly explain how the context of their community underpins the school’s Christian vision. Strategic actions, decided through the lens of Christian love, contribute substantially to the flourishing of all.
- Carefully planned opportunities are woven through the curriculum, enabling pupils to develop spiritually.
- Collective worship is expertly planned and organised. It expresses the vision and impacts deeply on the lives of pupils and adults.
- Wellbeing is a high priority for the school. Consequently, an extremely caring culture has been created where pupils and adults are treated well.
- The leadership of religious education (RE) has skilfully designed a well-balanced, engaging curriculum, which builds on prior knowledge. As a result, pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of worldviews and a range of religions, including Christianity.

Areas for development

- Embed a shared definition and common language for spirituality, to enrich the flourishing of all.
- Develop pupils’ opportunities to make meaningful contributions during worship. Thus, extending the ways in which it is inclusive and inspiring.
- Facilitate pupils’ independent opportunities to be advocates for change, broadening their understanding of justice and responsibility.

Inspection findings

Mereside offers a loving, warm welcome to all. The school is a member of the St. Chad's Academy Trust. Consequently, together the dedicated leadership team, staff and the trust members wholeheartedly promote the deeply Christian vision. Inspired by Jesus' teachings, love is naturally referred to by adults and pupils as a gift that enfolds the school. Adults show Christian love. Therefore, pupils learn to love one another, helping shape the people they are now and those they aspire to become. Christian values that include hope, joy and peace, have been carefully chosen to express the vision. Pupils understand the source of the vision and associated values. One pupil commented, 'Love helps us to work with each other and be kind.' A former pupil, currently on work experience, explained how the Mereside Christian values empowered him to flourish at secondary school. Both the school and the trust celebrate pupils using the values, highlighting their importance in Christian life. Enhanced by the trust's vision 'Children First,' leaders equip pupils to be caring global citizens.

Deeply connected partnerships with the trust, partner schools and the diocese enhance professional development opportunities. As a result, staff have extremely high levels of skill and confidence. Committed trust members evaluate the impact of the Christian vision through a long-term strategic monitoring plan. This ensures the impact is sustainable. Lives are changed through the courageous decisions they make. These include financial commitments such as, supporting families by subsidising extra-curricular activities and trips, to ensure all pupils can flourish.

The vision inspired curriculum has the school's values interwoven through its core. The themes of community, wisdom and dignity naturally thread through subjects. This has resulted in a richly relevant and aspiring curriculum, which enables pupils to develop healthy loving relationships. The vision drives staff to encourage all to reach their potential, unwavering in their support. Personalised intervention and small group sessions are effective in aiding pupils with their learning. The breadth of extra-curricular activities expands pupils' horizons, helping them to achieve their aspirations. Hence, all pupils, including the most vulnerable and those with additional needs, flourish. Therefore, the school is identified as a beacon school, due to its inclusive culture. There are planned opportunities for pupils to engage in spiritual reflection. Despite this, leaders recognise that there is a lack of shared understanding of spirituality and the associated language. This limits the wider opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum.

Collective worship is invitational and central to life at Mereside. It strongly expresses the vision of a community centred around love. Leaders have created a carefully planned and sequenced worship programme, underpinned by Christian values. This develops pupils' understanding of biblical texts and how they can be applied to life's choices. A strong partnership with the local church is well-established, enriching all aspects of worship. Families are welcomed to join regular worship in Church and seasonal services that occur throughout the Church year. Thus, it unites the whole community. Parents say that moments of prayer and reflection in Church make them feel spiritual. The trust enhances worship by sharing it across the schools, enriching the Christian life of all. Pupils enjoy the regular worship led by the vicar and the Open the Book team. These experiences enrich their knowledge of Anglican practices. Worship is inclusive, with staff lovingly supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in taking part. As a result, worship helps to guide the actions of all, enabling pupils and adults to flourish. However, to ensure all fully access spiritual growth, leaders have rightly identified the need to increase pupil participation.

True to the vision, love and care shine through all relationships. Committed leaders and supportive trust members prioritise the good mental health of pupils and adults. Initiatives, such as mental health trailblazers and dedicated pastoral staff make a positive difference to the wellbeing of all. The school has also created a nurturing space called the 'Learning Lounge.' Pupils access this if they need help and/or a calm environment. Thus, pupils with additional emotional needs are well supported, enabling them to thrive. Leaders passionately voice how they are driven to reach out to pupils and families. Resources such as pupil premium

funding are used to actively break down barriers to learning and attendance. Hence, there is improved attendance and increased uptake of after school clubs.

Pupils behave well and talk about how making the wrong choices can be resolved by using wisdom and through forgiveness. They rightly say, teachers always help us to sort things out. Parents feel listened to and appreciate the open-door policy that is offered by leaders and every member of staff. They enthused about how the school's Christian values have influenced their children to have empathy and to be kind. Many examples were shared of how leaders understand and support staff professionally and emotionally. Further pastoral systems are also offered by the trust. Therefore, both pupils and adults feel valued, loved and treated well.

The presence of God's love is tangible in the way pupils are celebrated for their own uniqueness. Valuing everyone equally has shaped a culture where all are treated with dignity and respect. Through focused events and planned curriculum opportunities such as, Black History Month, pupils gain an understanding of injustice. Learning about inspirational role models has also inspired pupils to speak out against unfair treatment of others. Christian generosity is evident in the fundraising actions of the school community. Acts of charity have included, families donating to the local food bank. Pupils have then enthusiastically been involved in sorting and delivering food parcels. Though empowering pupils to take responsibility to make independent ethical choices to challenge inequality is less evident.

RE leadership reflects the school's vision and meets the requirements for the subject as a Church school. It is well-planned and skilfully builds on pupils' prior learning. Bold decisions regarding timetabling have enabled staff to work collaboratively. This facilitates the strategic monitoring plan and maintains a sharp focus on the subject. Leaders benefit from the supportive partnership with the diocese who provide guidance on improvements to the quality of RE. As a result, pupils and staff flourish. Pupils say they enjoy RE and speak knowledgeably about worldviews and a range of faiths. The diversity of Christianity as a worldwide faith is well understood by pupils. The school's focus faith day is a further opportunity to expand pupils' knowledge, through teaching parents about religions and worldviews. Ultimately, pupils are confident in discussing their own views and respect different ideas and beliefs. As a result, pupils are well equipped to be caring global citizens who value and celebrate diversity.

The inspection findings indicate that Shrewsbury Mereside Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information					
School	Shrewsbury Mereside Church of England Primary Academy				
URN	147106	Pupils on roll	364	VA/VC/Academy	Academy
Diocese/Circuit	Lichfield				
Multi academy trust	St. Chad's Academies Trust				
Executive Headteacher	Laura Hopley				
Acting Head of School	Ffion Carr				
Chair of governors	David Castledine				
Inspector	Beverley Roberts			No.	2122
Date of Inspection	130923				