

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England VC Primary School, Southampton	
Address	Ascupart Street, Southampton, SO14 1LU
School vision	
<p>Rooted in our Christian foundation, we are an aspirational school serving our community and God. We seek to understand and recognise every child and their uniqueness – using this knowledge to develop children's gifts in accordance with the biblical principles: courage, creativity, and compassion. We prepare children to become global citizens of an ever-changing world.</p> <p>'Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.' 1 Peter 4: 10</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's mission statement is deeply rooted in biblical text. It is contextually appropriate and widely lived by the whole school community, making a positive difference. • The school enables people from richly diverse communities to live well together. Staff, parents and pupils understand and respect one another's beliefs and customs. As a result, people feel safe and flourish. • As a Church school, strategic planning for improvement is strong and effective. The school successfully secures the best outcomes for pupils in order that they can thrive. • Spirituality is embedded in the ambitious and creative curriculum. As a result, pupils' ability to express their spirituality is a strong feature of the school. • Pastoral care is strong for staff, pupils and their families. The culture of 'high expectations', 'no excuses' and 'whatever it takes' underpin a highly structured and caring approach to learning. Compassion is truly lived. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop governors capacity to share responsibility for self-evaluation of this as a Church school. This is so that the governing body is sufficiently robust and informed to continue to drive future school improvement. • Further embed the role of pupil prayer leaders to embrace pupils of all ages who wish to lead on this. This is to further empower them as advocates for the value of prayer in all religions. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>St Mary's is a truly transformational Church school, serving a richly diverse area. Leaders are dedicated to ensuring all individuals develop their gifts and flourish. The school's Christian vision is articulated in its mission to serve both the community and God. Leaders recognise the uniqueness of every pupil and work hard to empower them to use their gifts. They will do 'whatever it takes' to</p>	

realise that potential. This reflects the school's biblical principles of courage, creativity, and compassion. These values are not merely aspirational. They are actively integrated into the school's ethos, shaping the curriculum and preparing pupils to be global citizens. Many pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL) and arrive with little or no English. St Mary's works effectively to dismantle any barriers that might limit life chances.

Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's Christian foundation in guiding decision making. There is a consistent integration of these principles into strategic planning and policies. For instance, decisions regarding curriculum development, pastoral care, and community engagement are explicitly tied to the school's Christian ethos. Leaders articulate the influence of this, fostering a sense of accountability and purpose. There is much valued pastoral support for leaders from the diocese and from the local church. However, the responsibility for self-evaluation regarding church school priorities is not sufficiently shared. It is particularly important that new governors understand that this is a shared responsibility.

Leaders commitment to the Christian foundation is palpable in the vibrant atmosphere that embraces diversity. The school has earned a commendable reputation among families for being genuinely inclusive. Places are oversubscribed as a result. The acknowledgment that all are seen as God's children, underscores the commitment to inclusivity. Staff are dedicated to creating an environment of ambition where every child can thrive. Pupils in Key Stage 2 attend 'IntoUniversity'. This is a partnership collaboration with Southampton University, exposing them to higher education, tutoring and developing life skills. Year 6 pupils encounter inspiration for various professional careers through employer visits. There is a strong and inspiring link with Southampton football club. The impact is that pupils explore wider horizons to live life in all its fullness. The school successfully integrates those with EAL or special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils and parents speak of being welcomed, valued, and supported. This reflects a commitment to journeying alongside every child, embodying the values at the core of its Christian mission.

Curriculum leadership is robust. Leaders ensure that curriculum plans connect knowledge across different subject areas to create meaningful learning experiences. They look beyond primary school and aim to produce responsible, respectful, and ambitious young citizens. Technology such as virtual reality headsets enhance learning. Leaders' dedication to high standards and character development is evident in the meticulous planning of the curriculum. The emphasis on courage, creativity, compassion, opportunity, and engagement aligns with biblical principles. The bespoke character curriculum superheroes, embody these virtues. Pupils understand their importance as they are embedded in various aspects of learning. This fosters resilience in pupils. A rich array of cultural and faith-based content is integrated into subjects. This allows pupils to express spirituality through various media. As an example, beautiful and inspiring artwork created by pupils adorns corridors. This has an uplifting impact. The 'Windows, Mirrors, and Doors' approach provides opportunities for pupils to reflect on personal and spiritual development. This is particularly commendable given that a large proportion speak EAL. Furthermore, the positive impact of the curriculum, empowers pupils to share and celebrate their cultural and religious identities. Parents report that they learn about a variety of religions from their children, enhancing community understanding. 'The Great Exhibition' showcases and celebrates pupils learning with their parents.

Religious education (RE) is led with a clear focus on engaging pupils' understanding of core concepts. Leaders track progress, ensure compliance with schemes of work and sufficient time is allocated to the subject. The well sequenced curriculum respects and incorporates diverse faith perspectives. Pupils' reflections indicate a nuanced understanding of various religious traditions. This contributes to a well-rounded religious education that facilitates the flourishing of all. Pupils confidently discuss Bible stories, making links to their own lives. Pupils also demonstrate an understanding of shared similarities between the faiths of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Medium

term RE plans to further support teachers are at an early stage of development. Those which have been produced enhance the RE curriculum and the development of skills.

Collective worship is a thoughtful blend of Christian teachings and messages that resonate with the diverse population. Staff and pupils are positive about how the school's vertical tutoring enhances worship. This fosters a sense of unity and understanding amongst the school community. The integration of celebration, reflection, prayer, song, symbols and imagery creates a spiritually enriching experience. This inspires pupils to be reflective and to live out the school values by being courageous, creative and compassionate. The Year 6 prayer leaders talk with conviction about the importance of prayer and spirituality. They have the capacity to contribute further and to include younger pupils within their vertical tutoring groups. This will sustain the prayer leaders movement with older pupils keen to be role models.

St Mary's serves its community, in line with its mission. For example, the school runs 'By Mums 4 Mums' to support with compassion those affected by domestic violence. The establishment of the intergenerational 'St Mary's Friendship Group', fosters meaningful relationships and exemplifies the school's commitment to community cohesion. The school provides literacy programs for parents. This enables them to engage with their children's learning, improve employability and contribute positively to the community.

St Mary's successfully models being an advocate for justice and responsibility. Initiatives provide equity to meet the needs of the community. For example, a free breakfast for all pupils and an accessible food bank. There are free after school clubs, run by school staff, which give pupils enrichment. Pupils are given opportunities to voice concerns and initiate fundraising through the school council. This builds awareness of the Christian tenets of justice and responsibility. A 'sustainability week' aligns with the Christian concept of stewardship. For example, they litter pick, experience the power of growing seeds and planting trees. Pupils advocate for one another, providing support as translators. They engage meaningfully with the school's bespoke Black History curriculum. Some pupils have a deep understanding of inequality and injustice having been refugees. Pupils articulate how the school values of courage and compassion enable them to support others.

These inspection findings indicate that St Mary's Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	16 November 2023	URN	116343
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	585
Diocese	Portsmouth; Winchester		
MAT/Federation			
Executive Headteacher	Daniel Constable-Phelps		
Chair	Lisa Benham		
Inspector	Amanda Brockway	No.	2214