



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Merrow Church of England Controlled Infant School	
Address	Kingfisher Drive, Merrow, Guildford, GU4 7EA

School vision	
<p>Through an inspiring curriculum, within our safe and nurturing school, 'Together we grow' to flourish as individuals to be the best we can: Together we grow to become resilient, motivated and curious learners.</p> <p>Together we grow to build meaningful relationships. Together we grow to have a positive impact in the world. Together we grow valued and loved as unique individuals.</p> <p>Our vision is inspired by the words of Psalm 1, verse 3: 'He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.'</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders have a deep appreciation of the needs of their school community. This enables them to make decisions at all levels that are appropriate and underpinned by the distinctly Christian vision. • The curriculum is shaped to enable pupils to flourish and grow as curious learners. This unwavering ambition for all means that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are well supported. • The school nurtures and cultivates an inclusive culture that is welcoming to all. Pupils and staff feel valued and cared for which fosters positive relationships. • Collective worship is deeply enriched through strong partnerships with the local church and diocese. This means that worship is securely planned to inspire and enable pupils to grow spiritually. • Strong and effective leadership in religious education (RE) ensures that learning is well-organised. It enables pupils to learn about a range of religions and worldviews. This means that pupils build their knowledge and make connections to their own lives. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed a whole school understanding of spiritual development. This is so that staff are confident in recognising where opportunities exist across the curriculum to support spiritual growth. • Build opportunities for prayer and reflection beyond collective worship. This is to support pupils to deepen their own sense of spirituality. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>The school's Christian vision 'together we grow' permeates all aspects of the life of the school. Underpinned by biblical teachings, the vision drives all decision making. This is exemplified by leaders' decision to federate with Merrow Junior School. Therefore, enabling the school to serve the</p>	



needs of the community more effectively. Leaders have managed this significant change sensitively, shaping the Christian vision collaboratively. This means that staff, pupils and parents understand the school's foundation as a Church school. The values of kindness, respect, integrity and perseverance are celebrated and central to the Christian vision. Leaders, including governors, embrace changes as opportunities and are ambitious for the school.

Driven by the vision, decisions about learning cultivate flourishing through the delivery of a broad and rich curriculum. Leaders have begun to foster a shared and unifying language of spirituality. This has been nurtured through professional development. Consequently, staff have a growing awareness of how the curriculum supports spiritual growth. For example, in personal, social, health education (PSHE), topics are explicitly linked to Christian values. Additionally, pupils are supported in exploring big 'I wonder' questions. This promotes curiosity. School visits enrich the wider learning, for instance, pupils visit Priors Field Sculpture Trail, various educational farms and castles. This allows for pupils to expand their horizons and brings learning to life. The school's eco-group has developed an outdoor pond area for pupils to spend time with nature. These moments support pupils in thinking about their relationship with the natural world. For example, visiting Guildford Cathedral as part of an environmental day, encouraged pupils to consider their responsibility to God's creation. However, opportunities to identify spiritual development across all learning are underdeveloped. Leaders demonstrate their deep commitment to the vision through the support for all learners, including pupils with SEND. An impressive range of interventions such as maths and phonics booster groups are tailored to meet the needs of the school community. As a result, all pupils are supported to flourish and develop their own gifts.

Leaders have established a strong, collaborative team to plan and deliver an invigorating programme of collective worship. This encapsulates the school's deep commitment to the Christian vision. Support from the diocese and clergy from St John the Evangelist Church enhances this further. Consequently, worship is uplifting, engaging and pupils feel included. The termly worship themes enable pupils to explore and reflect on Christian values, underpinned by Bible stories. Pupils understand how values such as forgiveness apply to them. 'Open the Book' storytelling sessions further engage and deepen understanding. Pupils relate messages they hear in worship to their own community and actions. Additionally, supported by the church youth team, pupils are confident exploring big questions about life. This leads to spiritual flourishing and a personal search for meaning. Worship promotes a culture of positive relationships where pupils seek to make an impact in the world. Pupils value the time for invitational prayer and reflection during worship. However, there are fewer opportunities for prayer outside of this time. Singing provides moments of joyful and inspiring togetherness which further supports pupils' spiritually. 'Pause' days take place throughout the year, with services in the church at Easter, Christmas and Pentecost. This time as a school community is cherished by both staff and pupils, enabling them time for deeper reflection. Parents welcome and appreciate the opportunity to join the community on these joyous occasions. This further supports the relationship between school and home.

This is a school that is proud of its inclusive and welcoming ethos. Leaders promote positive relationships which are explicitly linked to Christian values. Each week individual pupils are celebrated for living out these integral values. This is treasured by the pupils, and they are proud to see their names added to the prominent tree display. Pupils appreciate and celebrate diversity within their community. This includes learning about religious and cultural experiences such as the Lunar New Year and Eid. As a result, pupils respect and value one another, recognising that everyone has unique gifts. Healthy relationships are modelled through the use of restorative justice, social skills and friendship groups. Consequently, pupils are supported to mend relationships and treat each other well. Leaders prioritise, and are successful in, supporting the mental health and wellbeing of both pupils and staff. Using zones of regulation and emotional coaching encourages pupils to understand their own feelings. This is further promoted through parental workshops that

equip parents to support their child’s mental health. As a result, this strengthens partnerships between home and school. Leaders including governors, consider the views and wellbeing of staff. For example, subject leads receive additional time to develop learning as a result of staff feedback. Consequently, staff feel listened to with the support to develop professionally.

Pupils engage in a range of opportunities that promote a sense of justice and responsibility. The school council are proud of their achievements, which include the design of reading areas for each classroom. This results in pupils feeling empowered to action change in their school. Inspired to help those in need, pupils organise food hampers for the local community. Pupils consider how they live out Christian values and how their actions impact on others. A gardening day organised by the school eco-group brought together parents, staff and pupils to plant a wildflower meadow. Pupils and staff embrace these opportunities to make a positive change to their school space.

Strong leadership in RE means that the curriculum has been carefully designed. Therefore, knowledge is well-sequenced and coherent, enabling pupils to build on their learning. Lessons are creatively planned, using up-to-date resources and training. This promotes high levels of engagement and enjoyment of the subject. Pupils learn about a range of world faiths including Christianity and this supports pupils in developing their religious literacy. Professional development for the teaching of RE is prioritised by leaders. This is further supported through well-established partnerships with the diocese and through engagement with a wider RE network. This means that staff are confident teaching RE and that they are up-to-date in their knowledge of the curriculum. Governors effectively monitor standards in RE through visits and reports from the subject leader. This supports the overall development of the subject in this Church school.

The inspection findings indicate that Merrow Church of England Controlled Infant School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	14 March 2024	URN	125160
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	133
Diocese	Guildford		
MAT/Federation	Merrow Schools Federation		
Executive Headteacher	Louisa Dormer		
Chair	David Wright		
Inspector	Rachel Croft	No.	2126