

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Nicolas and St Mary Church of England Primary School

Vision

'Be Courageous! Live and Learn in Faith, Hope and Love'

'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.' Joshua 9:1

'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.' 1 Cor 13:13

Strengths

- The Christian vision and values of the school are deeply embedded and are the lived experience of the school community. This shapes relationships so that all are treated with dignity and respect.
- Leaders create a supportive culture of learning which is driven by a highly committed, cohesive staff team. Pupils are encouraged to be inquisitive and reflect on their personal development through engaging experiences.
- An enveloping ethos of nurture and inclusion underpins the school's aims and aspirations for all. As a result, mental health, wellbeing and access to learning are prioritised and pupils and adults flourish.
- The Christian vision shapes the enriched learning opportunities in the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. This contributes significantly to the development of the whole child and their flourishing.

Development Points

- Establish a clear and systematic plan for evaluating the impact that the school's Christian vision has on all aspects of daily life. This is to enable all leaders to contribute to monitoring so that there are foci for effective improvement.
- Ensure opportunities for spiritual flourishing are embedded into all aspects of learning. This is to enable pupils to speak clearly about the impact of these experiences in relation to their spiritual development.
- Deepen pupils' understanding of ethical choices and justice. This is to enhance opportunities for them to further explore their responsibilities in a global context.



Inspection Findings

St Nicolas and St Mary is a vibrant and community-focused school. Through the deeply embedded Christian vision, leaders seek to respond to the changing nature of their community and its needs. The school expresses its vision through the values of friendship, compassion, respect and creativity. These are all rooted in biblical examples which reflect the school's aspirations for its community. Pupils and adults speak confidently about the school's values, and how they affect the ways people live every day. Staff model them as they set high expectations, raise aspirations and build strong relationships. This means that both pupils and adults are nurtured and empowered. This is a school where people know that they are loved. The school collaborates strongly with governors, the diocese, academy trust and local church leaders. These know the school well and visit often. Because of this, they are able to work in active partnership with the school, ensuring that staff feel supported. Leaders have anchored the school in the vision and values during the period of organisational transition. As a result, the school community is well-placed to continue to thrive as the academy context changes. However, during these changes, development and monitoring of the impact of the vision has paused or is inconsistent.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is vibrant, challenging and offers enriching opportunities. In line with the school's vision, it challenges pupils to be curious, courageous and deeply engaged in their learning. The curriculum is well-planned and adaptive to meet pupils' needs. As a result accessible, rich learning experiences enable them to flourish. High-quality extra-curricular provision extends pupils' experiences within and beyond the school. Clubs, activities and visits provide deep opportunities for personal development and nurturing individual talent. At the heart of the curriculum there is a culture of inclusion and commitment to removing barriers to learning. Language of the month and weekly sign language exemplify the school's passion for inclusivity. Leaders ensure staff have access to high-quality training and opportunities for professional growth. For example, all teachers are supported to undertake enhanced professional qualifications in the leadership of teaching. Consequently, staff are better empowered to lead the design and implementation of learning opportunities. This is enhanced through a strong school improvement partnership with the diocese. Spiritual development is interwoven throughout the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Staff and pupils relate the shared language of 'windows, mirrors and doors' to reflect on learning and life in school. Spirituality journals support pupils to begin to articulate and question their own understanding of spirituality. As a result, pupils are exploring their own thoughts and big questions in many aspects of the curriculum.

Collective worship is central to the school day and is greatly valued by pupils and staff. It underpins pupils' understanding of how to live and work together as a school and within the community. Reflecting the school's values, collective worship is deeply inclusive. Use of sign language and high levels of support ensure that all pupils are able to engage. Through exploration of Bible stories and the Christian values, pupils are encouraged to explore faith and spiritual development. Pupils appreciate the reflective nature of collective worship and how it gives them time to think about life's big questions. Services that are open to parents and families are well-attended and highly valued. This means that the spirituality of the school impacts on the community more widely. Staff and pupils are invited to evaluate worship and share their responses with leaders. As a result, people feel empowered to develop ideas to enhance the spiritual life of the school. The clergy and the churches are key to the development of collective worship and nurturing spiritual development. Strong partnerships with community groups and charities bring a richness to pupils' experience of worship. Consequently, pupils' understanding of the Christian vision and values is deepened through meeting the lived experience of others. Pupils are encouraged to explore individual reflection through the class prayer boxes and use of the reflection garden. As a result, they confidently explore and share their own spirituality through prayer and personal contemplation.



Leaders create a culture of kindness and respect where people are cared for and valued. The Christian values are shared by the school community, resulting in strong and supportive relationships. Leaders strive to provide the highest levels of support and care for pupils and families. Parents value the school and the caring approach of staff. As a result, they say their children 'know that they are loved and special'. The school provides significant support for pupils and families through difficult times. This has been strongly reciprocated in the community's ongoing support of the school. Inclusion and diversity are actively celebrated through experiences such as the buddying approach and working with diverse community groups. This enables pupils to develop their understanding of how to live well together. High-quality support for pupils, families and staff from external agencies enables effective strategies for inclusion in school and at home. Consequently, pupils are nurtured in their learning, and staff and families are assisted in supporting pupils' needs. Mental health and wellbeing are a significant priority for school and trust leaders. The clergy are central to this approach through the deeply appreciated weekly wellbeing visits with staff. School and academy trust approaches, such as reducing staff workload and providing access to high-quality support and guidance, enable staff to flourish.

Leaders strive to create an outward-looking culture. Opportunities for pupils to reflect on local and global issues of justice are built into worship and the curriculum. As a result, pupils explore the impact of ethical decision-making and relate this to their own experiences. Regular community visits, such as singing at a residential care home, support pupils to understand their responsibilities towards others. Links with partners in Ethiopia and France aid pupils to explore global responsibilities and people's rights. Consequently, they are able to understand and celebrate the culture and heritage of others. Whilst not yet fully embedded across the school, pupils have some good opportunities to explore justice and responsibility.

Religious education (RE) is a high priority and makes an important contribution to the school's Christian character. The teaching of RE is effective across the school and is adaptive to meet the needs of pupils. The rich and well-balanced curriculum supports pupils' development and understanding. Christianity is taught in every term, so that pupils understand it as a living and diverse faith. Other religions and worldviews are explored in increasing depth throughout the school. Pupils enjoy learning about the diversity within and between religions and can relate this to their lives and community. They link their understanding to their learning across the curriculum. Leaders have invested in high-quality training for teachers, which is enhanced by the strong partnership with the diocese. As a result, confident teaching enables pupils to make good progress against the curriculum and assessment criteria. They recall prior learning well and are empowered to reflect their questions and understanding through writing, discussion and different media. Exploration of big questions enables pupils to develop their experience of worldviews, theology and philosophy in RE. Whilst this aspect of the curriculum is developing, leaders have provided a framework which enables pupils to question effectively.

Information

Address	Eastern Avenue, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex, BN43 6PE		
Date	21 October 2024	URN	149006
Type of school	Academy (formerly Voluntary Aided)	No. of pupils	394
Diocese/District	Chichester		
MAT/Federation	Bishop Otter Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Andrew Lincoln		
Chair of Governors	Helen Harvey		
Inspector	Jeremy Piper		