

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England Aided Primary School			
Address	Link Lane, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 2AN		
Date of inspection	13 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Aided Primary
Diocese	Chichester	URN	126048

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

St Mary's is a primary school with 324 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. An Ofsted inspection was conducted in January 2019 when the school was judged to be requiring improvement with an outstanding judgement for Early Years. Since April 2019, there has been a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and a restructured senior leadership team.

The school's Christian vision

'A Christ centred school, with a child centred curriculum'

We are 'A Christ-centred school with a child-centred curriculum' where wisdom and love guide and influence learning and teaching for our whole community. We treasure each child and enable them to flourish, using their God-given potential and establishing a secure foundation for them to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Key findings

- Driven by a committed new leadership team the strong Christian vision and values, based on love and wisdom, guide all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils and adults flourish in an atmosphere of mutual dignity and respect.
- The Christian character of this school, enriched by the school's core values, supports positive relationships for all. Each member of the school is seen as a unique child of God and treasured for who they are and the gifts that they bring.
- The provision and pastoral care for pupils who have additional needs and for their families is highly effective, enabling all pupils in the school to flourish. It is a living testament to the school's Christian care.
- The intrinsic partnership between school and church communities supports meaningful collective worship with noteworthy pupil engagement, offering a variety of ways to encounter God and space for spiritual growth.
- Religious education (RE) is taught well and as a result, pupils learn how to treat other people, whatever their background, with dignity and respect.

Areas for development

- Enable staff to recognise spiritual opportunities across the curriculum and to explore them more deeply with pupils.
- Expand opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of living in a multicultural and diverse world.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge and understanding to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship as true spiritual partners.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The dedicated headteacher, supported by a passionate staff team, lives out the distinctly Christian vision and values that shape this inclusive, caring community. Leaders talk confidently about the biblical principles of love and wisdom which underpin the vision. The headteacher has created a cohesive senior leadership and staff team who share her enthusiasm. New staff receive very effective support so that they understand the ethos of Church schools. Staff at all levels feel valued and are committed to the school's vision and governors are dedicated to fulfilling their responsibilities. A recent audit by the diocese has resulted in improved practice. This is seen in strategically focused meetings, rigorous questioning, which holds leaders to account, targeted governor training and a structured monitoring system which focuses on the impact of the school's vision. Partnerships with other schools and the diocese effectively support Church school improvement. Leaders are fully aware of current national developments in Church school education.

The school has faced significant challenges over the last two years. The new headteacher has reviewed the curriculum, with the school's distinctive vision at its centre, and has established teaching and assessment strategies so that pupils are now flourishing. Internal data indicates that the school is on track to be in-line with current national attainment

Pupils are happy and feel safe. They enjoy and are challenged by their learning because of the creative opportunities, 'big questions' and real-life experiences which are woven through the curriculum. Year 6 pupils speak confidently about the study of the creation story versus the development of the universe. The investment in Forest School allows pupils to be independent, develop resilience and provides valuable spiritual experiences. However, spiritual opportunities are not consistently recognised and accessed across the breadth of the curriculum. The Christian vision and values impact positively on pupils' desire to challenge injustice. Pupils are passionate about taking care of their local community and their charitable work and they link these to the biblical teachings of Jesus. The school has links with Sierra Leone. As a result, pupils are starting to develop an understanding of global issues. However, there are limited opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of living in a diverse multicultural world.

Support for vulnerable pupils is a strength. Dedicated staff meet a diverse range of needs through a personalised curriculum approach. Parents speak highly of the school's commitment to meeting the learning and emotional needs of their children, 'The school has a genuine desire to see every child succeed, and its Christian values are lived out on a daily basis.'

The vision and associated values successfully uphold the dignity and value of all as children of God. As pupils reflect, 'We are all equal and all different. God will accept us as we are.' The school, through its inclusion, behaviour and anti-bullying policies, effectively prevents and addresses any incidents of prejudicial behaviour by creating a positive climate of respect. Every conversation with a pupil is a positive one; pupils' talk about being given skills to resolve problems and know that 'every day is a new day'. Consequently, standards of behaviour are high. The wellbeing and mental health of all members of the school community is a key priority. The caring and supportive work of the school's pastoral team is essential in ensuring that the needs of families and individuals are quickly identified and met. Staff attribute their sense of wellbeing to the school's ethos, talking passionately about the sense of being part of team where everyone flourishes because of the care and respect that they experience.

Daily worship is fundamental to school life. Staff and pupils feel included and involved and speak passionately about the impact and support it provides for them as individuals. Whilst pupils make noteworthy contributions to leading worship, there are not many opportunities for them to contribute to future planning. Biblical teaching is central to worship. As a result, pupils talk confidently about the relevance of Jesus' teaching to their own lives. Worship explores Christian values and themes imaginatively, so that it constantly refers to the school's vision and values. Pupils speak of worship as making them feel calm. They enjoy the stillness and silence that it brings because, 'God is there listening to us and we know he is there for us.' Worship is further enhanced by termly Eucharist services which engage the whole community. Pupils see this opportunity as, 'my time to have a good think with God'. Prayer and reflection are integral features of worship. Pupils know and use traditional prayers. They write and use their own prayers for personal and public use. Through their worship experiences pupils are developing a deep understanding of God as the Father, Jesus his Son 'who came to show us how to love one another' and the Holy Spirit who works in us so that, 'we can be wise in our decisions and follow the right path.' Music also plays a significant role in further enabling worship to be accessible to all and is another link between the school and Church. The Church and local community play a

daily role in the life of the school, with staff and parents being involved with the diocesan mission action planning groups. These relationships are fruitful and beneficial in developing the school as a worshipping community. The vicar is a welcome presence in the school and known by all. He works closely with leaders on developing a Christ centred school.

RE teaching strengthens the school's core vision and values and reflects the Church of England's statement of entitlement for RE. The school uses a range of resources to support high quality RE, such as Understanding Christianity. Books and lessons indicate that RE is taught in a creative way. Pupils engage with religious texts and theological ideas and develop age appropriate skills of enquiry, analysis and interpretation. RE lessons offer pupils the opportunity to ask and answer searching questions and develop their knowledge of Christianity and other major world faiths. Older pupils can reflect on different beliefs and how these could shape peoples' lives. Pupils enjoy learning and see it as an opportunity to understand different cultures and develop respect.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Effective leadership, alongside targeted mentoring and coaching of all teachers, has resulted in consistently good teaching. Regular moderation ensures that the curriculum provides appropriate challenge for all abilities ensuring all pupils make good progress. The school has revised its marking and assessment strategies, and this is improving practice to capture pupils' deeper knowledge and understanding of RE.

Headteacher	Samantha Copus
Inspector's name and number	Jacqueline Cobb 926