

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. Mary's Church of England Primary School			
Address	Charles Street, Wakefield, WF14PE		
Date of inspection	3 February 2020	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary
Diocese	Leeds	URN	108269

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	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

St. Mary's is a primary school with 203 pupils on roll. Very few pupils are of White British heritage, the majority are of Asian heritage. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages.

The school serves a multi-faith community that is ethnically, socially and economically diverse.

The school's Christian vision

St. Mary's has a clear vision with three key branches, growing from the core value of **HOPE**. Through the grace of God, we have the hope of a new and better start.

Founded in hope St. Mary's is where all find their voice, grow in wisdom and live well in community and service.

Key findings

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, supported by dedicated staff and an effective governing body has led to a highly inclusive Christian community in which all flourish. School has developed its practice in supporting other local schools in enhancing the impact of their vision, values and ethos.
- The uncompromising Christian vision developed on Biblical teachings drives the focus on the whole child. This and the focus on each child as unique, allows all to be the best they can be. The biblical underpinning of the vision drives all aspects of school life. The biblical roots to the vision are not highly visible.
- The Christian vision is at the heart of the curriculum. Religious education (RE) plays a major role in this, creating clear links between subjects and enhancing teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Collective worship is invitational and engaging with an exemplary degree of pupil participation. Pupils are confident leaders of worship and have a highly positive personal relationship with prayer.
- Highly positive relationships with the local church support both the school and the diverse community. The church makes a recognisable contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

Areas for development

- Give greater prominence to the biblical theology of the vision, ensuring the relationship between these, the vision and worship is clear. Thus allowing the impact of these roots to be clearly celebrated.
- Share and develop the excellent practice that exists, internally and externally with a wider audience. Develop support offered to other schools in enhancing spiritual wellbeing and Christian distinctiveness.

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

Inspirational leadership ensures the Christian vision drives school daily life and strategic development. It is underpinned by biblical teachings that support the three key branches. Finding our voice, 'all people are made in God's image and are, therefore of infinite worth'. Live in community and service, 'God calls us to serve each other'. Growing in wisdom, 'we are called to love God not only with our hearts but with our minds and understanding'. The vision is based around hope. It reflects the context and all members of the school community can articulate what it means to them. Pupils explain it as 'letting our confidence out'. They explain the vision as accepting all, no matter what colour of the skin or religion you are, hope is for everyone. Pupils are proud that they welcome everyone unconditionally. The Christian vision is informing policies and therefore the excellent everyday practice. A pertinent example is the behaviour policy based on Genesis 1:31 'the first word said about us is that we are good'. There is an exemplary focus on developing the whole child through the vision, meeting pupil needs. The Christian value of service to others well embedded across the school community effectively supports families. School has a prominent role in the local partnership of church schools, sharing impact of their vision and staff development.

Governors have a highly visible presence in school, being very knowledgeable about their school and community. They have a good understanding of the daily impact of the vision and its role in school improvement. The information gained through frequent informal visits and monitoring is shared with other leaders. However, this is not routinely systematically drawn together, so impact is not always evident. There is a focus on talking to pupils, living out that part of the vision. The vision drives all decision making including budgetary. An excellent example is the resulting employment of a family liaison worker and a parent support advisor. The nurturing provision provided by the learning mentor facilitates vulnerable pupils to respond to the vision and to fulfil their potential. Wellbeing is a strength, illustrated by a staff wellbeing group. This results in adults as well as pupils have time to talk. Quality induction and professional development support all staff, whatever stage of their career, including developing future Church school leaders. The role of the RE lead in developing leadership skills, through the RE network exemplifies this. Staff interpret the vision as giving pupils hope for their future and supporting their growth as confident individuals. They feel valued and are articulate about how they support the vision, 'it changes the way we do our job and we follow it, and our personal faith in how we interact with pupils'. They value worship, links with the church and RE for their positive impact on pupils' daily lives. Faith is an integral part of school life, supporting exceptional care for vulnerable and high need pupils. Pupils speak of faith changing people's lives, 'people are better when they believe'.

Parents fully endorse the vision of the school and that it treats their children as individuals. They speak of the school bringing them together as a community. 'They know families of different beliefs in a way that would not be possible without the school.' Parents of other faiths are confident to visit the local church with their children. They feel welcome and valued, including to worship in school. They appreciate deeply the leadership of the headteacher, together with the approachable, caring staff. Parents speak of learning about other religions from their children.

The vision drives a knowledge rich and skill-based curriculum. It is central to the personal and social curriculum as well as powerfully supporting spiritual, moral and cultural development. This convincingly enhances respect for difference and diversity. High quality enrichment activities are accessible to all. They have a very well-developed understanding of the meaning of Jesus' teaching, explaining they are stories with a moral message. Behaviour is exemplary, with dignity and respect for all at the core. Pupils have an impressive range of opportunities to take responsibility. These include pupil parliament representatives, prefects, worship team, play-leaders and lunchtime assistants. They are involved in selecting social action projects, including how to support a school in Tanzania. Pupils are currently thinking about ways to deal with litter in the community, linked to the effective Forest schools provision. They speak of charity as doing as well as giving and question whether charity is better than praying. This has a positive impact on pupils as courageous advocates and showing the value of service.

Pupils confidently articulate that their school is special because of worship and prayer, explaining that 'God has called me'. Pupils speak of worship as being spiritual, and peaceful, 'I am close to God in school'. All classes are invited to worship. They follow a worship leader holding their class candle, showing 'God is with us'. Pupils

confidently lead worship. Prayer is an integral part with pupils independently sharing their own prayers. Prayer stones support less confident pupils, resulting in highly inclusive worship. This highly positive relationship with prayer is evident through the prayer board and tree being accessible at social times. They have a good understanding of the Trinity, speaking of the Holy Spirit being in everyone and giving courage. This contributes significantly to personal spirituality. The quality of worship is enhanced through implementing pupil ideas, shared through their monitoring and feedback. The exceptional partnership with the church is shown by its input into worship and positive relationships with families. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of Christianity as a global faith.

RE is taught in school with world views, allowing pupils to develop their understanding of issues. Understanding Christianity has a clear impact on the exceptionally strong links with teaching in other curriculum areas. Detailed planning ensures effective challenge in lessons. There is strong evidence from quality individual and whole class RE books of varied teaching methods, including through art and drama. The exemplary leadership ensures all staff have regular support, evidenced in exceptional outcomes for pupils. Pupil views and feedback are a well-established monitoring tool. They value RE as a time to share their thoughts and feelings. Appropriate links are made across several religions with pupils from different faiths having confidence to share their beliefs and practice. Younger pupils explain being grateful to God for creating the world and link it to their own lives. 'I am special because God made me'. Older pupils engage in quality debate about temptation, connecting their personal beliefs to how Christians may resist temptations. Displays showcase RE as an academic subject, although the quality is variable across classes. The inspirational subject lead has a prominent role in the local RE network, sharing and growing exceptional practice with partner schools.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

Teaching is consistently better than good. Creative teaching methods, including deeper questioning, challenge pupils. Quality discussion and debate contribute to high standards. Vulnerable pupils are supported to ensure they are able to shine and consequently make excellent progress. RE provides a safe environment for all pupils to learn and achieve. Assessment is regular, rigorous and reflective. Highly effective monitoring by leaders, together with internal and external moderating ensures the standard of teaching and learning remains high.

Headteacher

Mark Taylor

Inspector's name and number

Pat George 845