

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary and St John Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Address	Church Street, North Luffenham, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8JR		
Date of inspection	09/04/2019	Status of school	VA primary
Diocese	Peterborough	URN	I20229

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

School context

St Mary and St John is a primary school with 182 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are from White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. An Ofsted inspection in April 2018 judged the school to be good.

The school's Christian vision

Our vision is for every unique individual within our school community to grow in mind, body and soul in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and to flourish, encouraging 'the fruit of the spirit' to shine in all that they do. The school motto is 'let your light shine' (Matthew 5:16).

Key findings

- The Christian vision and associated values inspire all members of the school community to achieve their potential as unique human beings.
- Collective worship is inspirational and exemplary, contributing richly to the strong spiritual flourishing in evidence across the school.
- The school's cohesive Christian vision deeply influences strategic decision-making, policies and practice at all levels.
- Professional development for governors and staff results in effective support, challenge and pastoral care, enabling pupils to be their best, academically and personally.
- Driven by the school's Christian vision RE successfully nurtures and supports pupils in making deep and meaningful connections between life and faith.
- Teaching and learning in religious education (RE) is not always fully accessible to some groups of pupils hindering the development of key skills across the school. The recording of RE in pupils' books does not consistently reflect the depth of their knowledge and understanding in the subject.

Areas for development

- Ensure that learning in RE is accessible to all pupils to develop age appropriate skills across the school enabling pupils to flourish.
- Raise the quality of recording in RE so that it fully reflects the depth of pupil engagement and quality of learning in lessons.

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 deeply theological Christian vision inspires the whole school community to live out the school motto 'let your light shine' (Matthew 5:16). Pupils recognise that the vision and values are the fundamental foundation of their spiritual journey through life. They place great value in the 'fruits of the spirit' to guide their ethical choices and decision-making. Strategically, the impact of the vision is demonstrated through the prioritising of effective induction and high quality professional development. These are tangible examples of the high value attached to staff and governors, enabling them to flourish in their various roles. In addition, the school has a proven record of developing future Church school leaders and is a recognised provider of initial teacher training. The Christian headteacher is an exemplary role model for others, supported by a home-grown senior leadership team. In recognition of this, the headteacher is currently being sponsored by Peterborough diocese and is receiving training as a SIAMS inspector. Governors effectively monitor the impact of the vision on all areas of school life through the Christian Values Committee. Governors give practical examples of how the vision informs their strategic decision-making. This includes funding support for vulnerable pupils and meeting the need for nursery provision within the local community.

The school's curriculum planning and delivery is effectively linked to its vision and successfully meets the learning needs of all pupils, including the most vulnerable. Progress rates across the school are showing an upward trend and attainment levels at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved over the past two years. Pupils' spiritual flourishing is particularly well supported through the strong Christian ethos and the depth of provision within collective worship and RE.

The Christian vision is experienced in the quality of relationships where the 'fruits of the spirit' are a tangible feature of school life, guiding pupils to make positive choices. For example, in response to the plastic pollution in the world's oceans a pupil in Key Stage 2 wrote a community newspaper and started a campaign to recycle plastic. Evidence of courageous advocacy involves the school council and individual pupils taking action to address issues involving disadvantage. Frequently pupils are able to link their actions to the teaching of Jesus Christ. For example, their practical support for a school in The Gambia is motivated by the parable of the good Samaritan.

In seeking to live out its Christian vision the school promotes inclusivity and hospitality. Barriers to inclusion are significantly reduced through the role of the special needs co-ordinator and emotional literacy support assistants. Family support is readily available with excellent lines of communication between home and school enabling pupils to fulfil their potential. As a consequence, pupils' attendance rates are consistently above the national average indicating that pupils are happy at school and pastoral care strategies are effective. This is a further example of the impact of the 'fruits of the spirit' in creating a respectful and kind ethos within the school environment, which enables pupils to thrive. Parents are extremely appreciative of the way this enables pupils to value difference and so live harmoniously with each other. Staff speak passionately about the school's supportive environment and the impact of the Christian vision on their wellbeing. They value the accessible and confidential support they receive when needed. The school fully engages with the church and local community in various ways. For example, the school regularly hosts the Good Companions Group of senior citizens for lunch.

Invitational collective worship is a spiritually engaging experience that inspires a range of responses in pupils and adults alike. The close proximity between the school and St John the Baptist Church enables pupils to experience weekly collective worship in this sacred space. The special relationship between church and school supports mutual flourishing, evident in the depth of commitment on both sides of the partnership. The regular use of a child-friendly Anglican liturgy when attending church establishes a firm foundation for pupil's rich spiritual growth. A recent innovation, involves the introduction of a regular school Eucharist with relevant teaching from the rector and local clergy about the sacrament of Holy Communion. The school offers Year 6 pupils, staff and parents the opportunity to receive the sacrament of confirmation following a preparation course delivered by local clergy. Collective worship is planned to offer a rich spiritual experience that is inclusive of all. This is achieved through a diversity of approaches including live music, drama, and biblical stories, and a variety of leaders including staff and clergy. Pupils value time to pray and reflect in collective worship and at other times through the school day. A pupil in Key Stage 2 describing prayer as, 'Reassuring that God is there and that everything is safe in his hands.' Pupil's leadership and participation is optimised through the involvement of the Wildfire Crew, a team of pupil volunteers who regularly prepare and plan collective worship. As a consequence pupils articulate the relevance of faith in their own lives and the contemporary world.

All pupils enjoy RE and are able to demonstrate high levels of religious literacy when expressing opinions about the place of faith in their own lives. For example, a pupil in the reception class when explaining the importance of Easter stated that, 'Jesus wanted us to live forever and so he died.' RE fully supports the vision of the school through its comprehensive teaching of Christianity using the Understanding Christianity resource. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, take part in a Passion Play each Easter which further deepens their understanding of the importance of Easter for Christians. Inquiry-led learning through big questions supports pupils in deepening their knowledge and understanding of religion and faith. However, there are occasions when teachers do not adapt the learning so that it is fully accessible to some groups of pupils. A recent innovative 'World Religion Day' focusing on Judaism enabled pupils to study different aspects of the Jewish faith in greater depth. Their engagement with a range of world religions and worldviews is well supported by visits to religious places of worship providing pupils with valuable first-hand experiences.



The effectiveness of RE is good

RE teaching and learning is generally good across the school with evidence of innovative practice in some classes. Underpinned by the school's Christian vision RE successfully supports and challenges pupils to make deep connections between life and faith. There is some inconsistency in the standard of written recording in RE books in comparison to other core subjects. A comprehensive assessment system identifies that progress and attainment in RE is at least good. Vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties, flourish as a result of structured support.

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Inspector's name and number	Janet Northing 792