

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School				
Address	St Mary's Road, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7BU			
Date of inspection	12 March 2020	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary	
Diocese	Rochester	URN	118754	

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	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

St Mary's is a primary school with 250 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is well above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above national averages. The school's nursery is expanding in number next year.

The school's Christian vision

"Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Luke 18:16 We believe it is our mission at St Mary's, to enable pupils to meet confidently the challenges of adulthood, by striving for academic success and developing strong relationships based on the Gospel values of trust and respect. We aim to provide a learning environment and school community to be proud of, and that is inclusive of all pupils and families.

Key findings

- Leaders ensure that the school's Christian vision reflects its context and drives provision in the school. However, school policies are not explicitly underpinned by this vision and governors do not formally evaluate the impact of the school's vision.
- Leaders live out the vision and are passionate that no child is hindered at school. They ensure that an array of interventions are put in place so that 'no child is left behind' and all have the opportunity to flourish in school.
- Staff take time to know pupils and their needs so that they can support them in making progress and living well in the school community.
- Pupils see the importance of being a Church school and recognise that Christian values guide their relationships and behaviour. Daily collective worship, weekly mass, Church services and regular prayers are central to pupils' spiritual development.
- RE is well led and resourced. Pupils are taught to engage critically with religious texts and teachers are growing in confidence in delivering diocesan schemes and increasing their subject knowledge.

Areas for development

- Ensure that the distinctive Christian vision consistently and explicitly underpins development plans and school policies so that the vision clearly drives school improvement.
- Ensure that governors hold the school accountable for fully achieving its vision through formal monitoring processes.

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

School leaders have developed a distinctive Christian vision that reflects its context. The vision provides a clear mission for leaders and staff to ensure that all pupils are cared for. Although this vision is not clearly apparent in many policies, it is lived out and at the forefront of decision making by governors and leaders. The school invests in its staff to take degree courses, whilst teachers take part in research projects and post-graduate courses when appropriate. Staff enjoy working at the school and therefore many are long serving. Staff are passionate about the children they teach and are highly skilled in responding to their needs. Staff support each other, as one teacher remarked 'we are not a team, we are a family.'

The headteacher is passionate about social justice, and she embodies the school's vision and mission. Leaders share her enthusiasm. The informal motto of 'no child left behind' guides leaders as they decide what provision needs to be put in place for the children in their care. Leaders at all levels know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they review the impact of interventions, such as reading programmes, so they can respond wisely and adapt provision to meet the needs of learners. They do everything in their power to ensure that any barriers are removed to enabling pupils to flourish. As a community, the school is living out its vision and 'no child is hindered' when they are at school. Governors know their school and the community it serves well. They are experienced and monitor the actions and academic outcomes of the school well. However, governors do not monitor the impact of the vision in order to hold the school accountable for its effectiveness in driving ongoing improvement.

Pupils feel cared for and valued by the adults at school. They appreciate that staff are fair and consistent so that they can learn and behave well in school. They know the school's Christian values and see them as important in their daily lives. As a result, pupils realise the importance of good behaviour at school and show respect and care for each other. Behaviour in all observed lessons was very good and the majority of pupils were focussed on their learning and work well together on shared tasks. Pupils are encouraged to have a 'growth mindset' and challenges are viewed as learning opportunities, consequently they are confident to try new things. Once each term, all pupils have a 'growth day' where time is dedicated to their well-being, mental-health and sharing and listening to the views of the school community. These days also have a wider focus where pupils explore big topics such as 'care for the world'. Pupils are encouraged to be thankful for what they have and, from nursery onwards, pupils are taught that 'sharing is caring- it shows that we love each other'.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and pupils explore topics beyond the national curriculum. Art plays a prominent role in the school, with schemes of work covering Andy Warhol in nursery and Picasso in Reception class. A recent display of artwork, painted by pupils in collaboration with a local artist, explores the pupils' understanding of the school's values as told through the story of the Good Samaritan. Throughout the school building, pupils can see large canvas prints of masterpieces which further serve to inspire them. The school is an inclusive community and is particularly supportive of its vulnerable pupils and families, so that they are 'not left behind.' Pupils recognise that they have a voice at school, and are instrumental in deciding which charities to support. A pupil leader said 'we chose Barnardo's because we wanted to help homeless children.' Frequently, donations are given to the school by the community and passed on to those in need in the community.

The school offers a variety of clubs and these are very well attended by pupils before school, at lunch times and after school. Large numbers of pupils engage in the morning maths clubs. An enthusiastic and talented pupil choir meet after school weekly. The school wisely presents these clubs and other provision so that pupils can experience a greater 'fullness of life' but also so that appropriate support can be given when it is needed. All pupils have music tuition so they can learn to play a musical instrument. Leaders expect all pupils to succeed and they put interventions in place to make sure that all pupils can thrive regardless of starting points, disadvantage or SEND. The school gives a range of support, such as counselling and extra tuition, to those that need it most. Breakfast club was a joy to behold. Children feel at home in their classrooms, eating with their friends and peers. Free breakfast is offered to all and utilised by many. Staff use this time further to build relationships with pupils, get to know them and respond to their needs.

Pupils value worship in their school. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually. Daily collective worship is inclusive. Prayers at key points in the day serve to express and nourish the pupils' spirituality. Weekly mass is celebrated in school by the local parish priest, who is also an ex-officio governor. This provides pupils with a deeper appreciation and experience of liturgical tradition. This is balanced by pupils taking a strong role in leading and delivering daily collective worship where they explore Christian teachings and bible stories in creative ways. Pupils' monitoring and review of worship has led to improvements in pupil engagement in worship.

Religious education is well led and curriculum planning is effective. The RE leader attends diocesan training and ensures that all teachers are aware of new pedagogies and good practice. Teachers use the diocesan schemes and resources well to enable pupils to have a deeper understanding of Christianity and the major world faiths. In a strong Year 3 lesson, pupils were being skilfully taught to engaging critically with religious texts and stories at age appropriate levels. Likewise across the school, pupils are engaged in a variety of meaningful activities from role play to textual analysis. As a result, pupils enjoy learning in RE.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

RE teaching is graded as good or better through the school's monitoring process and this was verified at the inspection. The number of pupils working at expected standards and at greater depth has improved since the previous denominational inspection, and is broadly in line with national averages. SEND and disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with their peers. The school is refining its assessment of RE so that pupils can know if they are attaining and making progress in lessons and over time.

Headteacher	Amanda McGarrigle
Inspector's name and number	Patrick Boughton-Reynolds 897