

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Marcham Church of England (VC) Primary School

Vision

Living and learning with faith, community and hope.

For all to achieve beyond their expectations, and to become confident, motivated, life-long learners, able to contribute positively to a fast-changing world.

Marcham Church of England (VC) Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- School leaders provide inspirational and visionary Church school leadership. They have created a strong sense of Christian identity and expression which resonates within and beyond the school.
- Leaders ensure the Christian vision, and underpinning values, are central to and guide school actions and decisions. In doing so, they have created a culture which seeks to value everyone in God's world. This is a place to live and learn, where pupils and adults flourish.
- There is a rich and deeply imbedded relationship with the parish church. This special relationship brings together and unites the school community to fulfil the school's aims as a Church school.
- Collective worship permeates school life. It provides deep and meaningful opportunities to bring the community together to develop spiritually. It enables pupils and adults to reflect on their place in the world today and be the best version of themselves.
- Pupils are empowered and supported to bring about change and combat social injustice, serving their local community and beyond. In doing so, they make a meaningful and impactful difference to the lives of others. This reinforces the sense of fellowship and the values of community and hope.

Development Points

- Embed the newly implemented religious education (RE) curriculum. This will ensure that the pupils are provided with a range of structured and sequenced opportunities to develop religious literacy, and learn about a range of faith and worldview perspectives.
- Building on work recently begun, ensure that all pupils have the tools to articulate clearly their understanding of spirituality.



Inspection Findings

Marcham Church of England Primary is a very special school. This comes about because of an unwavering commitment to the realisation of its foundation as a Church school. It is also a result of inspirational leadership rooted in the teachings of Jesus. The school's carefully chosen Christian vision, and accompanying Christian values, drive school life. School leaders, and governors, have also chosen the biblical narrative of Noah's ark as a story of reference for living out the vision. The visual representation and expression of the ark helps further foster the sense of identity as a community of learners with faith and hope. The metaphor is a powerful one because it truly reflects what it means to be at Marcham Church of England Primary. The realisation of the Christian vision ensures that leaders have a steadfast commitment to ensuring adults and pupils are treated well and can flourish. Leaders exude hope and positivity. They take the well-being of staff seriously and ensure that they are supported to live out the Christian vision. Adults are also supported to be life-long learners. This enables them to be able to best respond to pupils' needs, so that they can become confident learners in an ever-changing world.

Collective worship is a cherished moment in the school day. It brings the community together so that the message of Jesus' love and teachings are shared. Living and learning with faith, community and hope permeates collective worship. Worship is inclusive and invitational. Pupils particularly enjoy re-enacting Bible stories and talk confidently about the learning that can be gained from them. They articulate, with confidence, how the school's chosen Christian values help them to be better at what they do, both in school and at home. When learning about compassion, for example, pupils explain how they can be compassionate towards each other. Equally, they identify it in the behaviours of others. They live out the values in their daily interactions, as in, for example, playleaders helping younger pupils to play games, or showing empathy and understanding towards those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Such behaviours are taken beyond the school gates. The community appreciate the school's Christian values-based approach and the positive impact it has on their child's development. In celebration worship, pupils also recognise and celebrate the successes and achievements of others.

The place of spiritual development is an all-important part of school life. Whole-school singing is spiritually up-lifting. The singing of welcome songs in collective worship, for example, fosters a sense of togetherness and community identity. Whilst worship provides rich opportunities for spiritual reflection, spirituality is imbued within the curriculum. Opportunities, for example, to reflect on the wonder of God's creation are actively sought. Recent work to develop the language of spirituality ensures that pupils and adults are gaining the tools to articulate spiritual thinking. While this work is still in its early stages, it is already showing signs of emerging impact.

The special bond between the parish church and the school creates a wonderful synergy that permeates school life. The relationship runs deep and is well-established. Parents speak overwhelmingly positively about the special partnership with the church. Many pupils attend the church-run holiday club and Sunday school. Pupils and adults regularly visit the local church to take part in key events in the Christian calendar, such as at Easter and Christmas. There are also opportunities to celebrate and mark rites of passage, such as the Year 6 Leavers' Service.

A strong sense of family and belonging, driven by the Christian vision, ensures that pupils are empowered to make a difference, locally and beyond. Their contribution to support the elderly community through helping at the Marcham café is spoken about with affection by pupils. It is equally valued by parents. The community garden project illustrates how the school works in tandem with the community to respond to local needs. Pupils also raise funds to support other local causes, and give generously, for example, to Abingdon foodbank. Pupils also talk enthusiastically about



their efforts to make a difference to those less fortunate further afield. As in, for example, recent fund-raising for vulnerable communities in Moldova.

School leaders, and governors, have reflected critically on how the curriculum is built from the starting point of the Christian vision and its underpinning Christian values. In doing so, they have ensured the curriculum emanates from, and is driven by, the school's Christian vision. The values of faith, community and hope weave their way through curriculum design and the wider curriculum offer. For example, the concept of community is developed through solving mathematical problems together, by partaking in competitive games in physical education, and through collective singing. It is also shown in structured opportunities to support the elderly with lunches at Marcham café or acting as a house captain. The wider curriculum ensures that pupils can flourish in a range of activities and pursuits. For example, in the school choir or in sports activities, such as football or netball.

RE is a high-profile and is well led. The RE Lead ensures the school stays abreast of ongoing developments in the subject. They maximise, for example, the specialist support from the diocese and attend regular training. The school has recently reviewed its RE curriculum, drawing upon the diocesan approved syllabus. It has been adapted to provide carefully structured and sequenced opportunities to reflect the needs of the school community. This includes planned moments to learn about a range of religions, such as Islam, Judaism and Hinduism, as well as Christianity and other worldview perspectives. In Reception, for example, pupils mark the Chinese New Year with celebration and creative activities. There are carefully thought through and meaningful opportunities to make links between RE and other subjects, such as history and geography. Bold curriculum choices ensure that pupils can critically engage with important themes. This helps them to understand their place in the modern world and appreciate the diversity of God's creation. School leaders, including governors, routinely monitor the impact of the RE curriculum. This ensures that it responds to the school's needs and is being driven by the Christian vision.

Information

Address	Morland Road, Marcham, Abingdon, OX13 6PY		
Date	06 February 2025	URN	123155
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	183
Diocese	Oxford		
Headteacher	Viv Hutchinson		
Chair of Governors	Jackie Sebire		
Inspector	Gary Price		