

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Marsh Baldon Church of England Primary School	
Address	The Green, Marsh Baldon, OX44 9LJ
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Good

School's vision
We aspire for all to: ● Flourish as unique, respected individuals ● Love learning, and aim for excellence ● Be confident, free thinkers who manage setbacks and take risks ● Be spiritual and embrace Christian values, so that they grow a deep sense of themselves and their responsibilities to the world. 'I came to give life, life in all its fullness' John 10:10
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong and compelling Christian vision drives everything in this school. This ensures that 'life in all its fullness' for everyone is at the heart of all decisions and actions. However, the language of the vision is less well-developed with parents/carers. • Through the culture of inclusion, created by leaders, all are empowered to 'live life to the fullest'. Each individual is known and valued so all pupils and adults have every opportunity to flourish. • The vision inspires pupils to engage in social action. They are beginning to challenge injustice through being courageous advocates for change in their local and national communities. • Collective worship is highly valued. Both adults and pupils make thoughtful responses, they find it inspiring and invitational, all feel included. However, opportunities for pupils to be more involved in its planning, leading and evaluation are less developed. • Religious education (RE) is well planned and has a high profile in school. Pupils give an informed and respectful understanding of a range of religions and worldviews. However, opportunities to critically engage with religious texts are at an early stage.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the language of the vision more widely with parents/carers. This will ensure that everyone in the school community can flourish and feel part of driving the vision forward. • Ensure pupils are more involved in the planning, leading and evaluating of collective worship. This will enable them to feel more engaged and enrich opportunities for their spiritual development. • Enhance pupil involvement in critically engaging with religious texts. This is to enable them to gain a deeper understanding of faiths and worldviews through asking and answering questions.

Inspection findings

A deep and compelling vision for everyone to 'live life to the full' permeates all aspects of this highly inclusive school. The vision has developed over recent years through ongoing consultations with the whole school community. The headteacher and governors clearly explain how biblical teaching roots both vision and its associated values. Governors ensure the vision is used to shape development plans and policies. They are developing an ongoing process that evaluates the effectiveness of the school as a Church school. The wellbeing of staff is a high priority. Staff state that they feel well supported by leaders. They appreciate opportunities for professional development and the way they are encouraged to embrace these. Parents are really pleased that their children know the values and that this encourages them to treat each other well. The 'buddy' system of Year 6 pupils supporting pupils in Reception is well established and highly valued by everyone. Pupils who struggle to thrive in other educational settings are welcome and quickly become valued members of this community. Many talk about the importance of the 'family' feel they experience. Everyone is treated as an individual, any concerns are quickly addressed and solutions implemented. Leaders directly attribute the drive to be deeply inclusive to the distinctively Christian vision. The values of integrity, respect, equality, co-operation, love and courage clearly underpin 'living life to the full'. These links are powerfully articulated by adults and pupils.

A broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum has been shaped by the vision and engages the pupils in their learning. Leaders are very aware of the many challenges of a small school. They carefully organise year groups and classes to maximise effective learning opportunities for each individual. Pupils who struggle to access the curriculum in a classroom setting are provided with bespoke learning opportunities. All pupils are very accepting of the different needs of individuals and fully embrace everyone as part of the community. There are high expectations of all. Staff know the pupils extremely well and ensure that all pupils are provided with opportunities to meet their full potential. This includes pupils considered more able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff talk about their shared understanding of spirituality. They explain how training opportunities enable them to recognise and nurture the spiritual side of life for themselves and others. For example: 'it helps me to feel connected, have an awareness of myself and others. I can reflect on the impact I make, taking a minute to stop and think'.

Positive behaviour is a high priority for everyone, ensuring that all are able to flourish and live life to the full. Clear expectations are known by all. Understanding why things have happened is paramount, hearing all perspectives and then finding ways to repair relationships. Staff, parents and pupils talk about how this works and how important it is as a life skill. They believe that everyone should have the opportunity to live life to the full. All have a responsibility to allow this to happen for others. Careful curriculum planning provides opportunities for pupils to think about things which need to be changed. This extends to life outside school and pupils speak powerfully about protecting the environment. They enjoy learning about how people live differently and are passionate about respecting those differences. A nurture club held at lunchtimes enables pupils to receive additional emotional support and opportunities to talk about their feelings. This is another powerful expression of the vision, ensuring more ways of helping all to live life to the full.

Staff and pupils highly value taking time out of their busy day to gather together for collective worship. Staff appreciate hearing pupils' perspectives on various aspects of the vision and values. These times provide space for them to reflect and be still for a while. All worship is highly inclusive, no-one is excluded. Pupils who find sitting quietly rather challenging are totally accepted and engage in their own way. Through the embedded culture of acceptance,

other pupils are able to listen carefully, without feeling distracted, and make thoughtful responses. Individuals state that they particularly appreciate worship outside when that is possible. They talk about opportunities to meet and discuss worship such as ‘working lunches’ with adults and are keen for these to continue. Some state they would really like to be more involved in making decisions about what happens in worship. There are strong links between the school and the local church. Clergy support the school as members of the governing body. They lead worship both in school and in the church. Creative ways are developed to engage with pupils. One example is the ‘friendship wigwam’ where they think about people who are important to them. Other initiatives such as ‘Open the Book’ and ‘Forest Church’ further enrich this provision.

RE has a high profile and pupils learn about a range of religions and worldviews. It provides a safe space where all can speak with respect about different beliefs and discuss what they believe themselves. Whole days spent exploring RE help to strengthen their understanding. Careful planning then ensures that learning is frequently re-visited and built upon. Visits to the local church are integral to the life of the school. Visiting other places of worship have been less frequent over recent years. Pupils talk about religious beliefs and what is contained in religious texts. However, they are less familiar with directly engaging with those texts.

Leaders at Marsh Baldon have created an extremely inclusive and caring school community where individuals are valued and nurtured. Their vision of ‘living life to the full’ attracts people to come and join the family feel of the community. They ensure that this ‘family feel’ also includes appropriate challenge to maintain high standards of learning. The courage and tenacity to continue striving towards this vision is a daily discipline which drives everything forward. The way that all work together ensures everyone has the opportunity to ‘live life to the full’.

Information			
School	Marsh Baldon Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	24 April 2023
URN	123131	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Oxford	Pupils on roll	69
Headteacher	Beccy Harris		
Chair of Governors	Tom James		
Inspector	Marion Standing	No.	971