

# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

## St Mary's Farnham Royal Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

### Vision

Through Faith as a Family we aspire to grow. Thriving for all our Futures, enabling us to Flourish individually and as a community.

'For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and future.'  
Jeremiah 29:11

### Strengths

- The school's deeply embedded Christian vision shapes the rich experiences that leaders provide. It supports pupils' love of learning.
- A new curriculum, created to embrace the school's vision, extends pupils' self-confidence and wellbeing. It fosters enquiry and elevates pupils' ability to think searchingly.
- Care for vulnerable pupils and their families is strong and inspired by the ideals expressed within the vision.
- Relationships across the school are warm and trusting because the vision is a lived reality. This means attitudes are positive and behaviour is good.
- Pupils are learning to show respect for others in different circumstances. They have an age-related concern for their community and the wider world.

### Development Points

- Extend the scope of religious education (RE) to include non-religious worldviews. This is in order to ensure its breadth deepens pupils' subject knowledge and develops their spiritual growth.
- Governors to create robust systems that evaluate the impact of the Christian vision within collective worship and RE. This is to explicitly inform the ongoing development of these areas within a Church school context.
- Develop a shared language around the school's understanding of spirituality. This is to secure opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum.



## Inspection Findings

St Mary's Farnham Royal School is a caring and harmonious community. Its distinctive Christian vision successfully brings together the ideals of 'faith, family, future and flourish'. This shapes the wealth of experiences that leaders provide and creates an engaging environment that supports pupils' love of learning. The school collaborates well with diocesan representatives. Consequently, their understanding of current thinking in Church school education is growing. This creates an ethos of continued improvement. Leaders at all levels take responsibility for modelling the vision in all aspects of school life. Relationships across the school are warm and trusting. Consequently, pupils are attentive and engaged with their learning. This, in turn, helps the school community to flourish.

Leaders have created a new curriculum to further embrace the Christian vision of the school. This is an ongoing project, designed to enhance learning and challenge across all subjects. Through discussion, debate and enquiry it promotes pupils' ability to think searchingly. Complemented by exciting enrichment experiences, such as educational trips and outdoor activity, it extends their learning. As a result, their self-confidence and wellbeing flourish. Additionally, within the curriculum there are incidental occasions for spiritual development. Moreover, teachers' understanding of spirituality, within a Church school context, is developing through training delivered by the diocese. However, the school's shared understanding and language of spirituality is at an early stage. This limits the extent that pupils' spiritual growth can be planned for across the curriculum.

Leaders ensure the school's curriculum creates opportunities for pupils to learn about renowned advocates of social change. It addresses global, ethical issues such as plastic pollution. Consequently, pupils organise fundraising activities and are proud of their achievements. Through engaging in such projects, they are beginning to understand that they can impact change within their community and beyond. These opportunities agree well with the school's vision to look to the future and to thrive. Furthermore, pupils take practical action, such as litter picking within the locality. Consequently, they are learning to show respect for others in different circumstances. They have an age-related concern for their community and the wider world.

Collective worship is an important part of school life and encompasses the school's vision of growth through embracing 'faith, family, future and flourish'. Themes are relevant and relate to pupils' experiences. Discussion opportunities within classroom based collective worship are linked to the curriculum's intention to foster enquiry and debate. This elevates pupils' ability to think deeply. It helps them develop a growing understanding of what is right and wrong and the ability to act accordingly. At the start of their time together selected pupils read a prayer of greeting. This leads to a change of pace in preparation for worship. Pupils are invited, but not compelled, to engage in activities of reflection and stillness. This is complemented by spaces within the school for pupils and adults to reflect quietly, including the spirituality garden. There is a fruitful partnership with the local church. It is well loved and well used, particularly for marking special events within the school and church calendar. For example, pupils and parents attend church for festivals such as Harvest and Easter, and for end of term celebrations. Clergy or church members lead these services that are enjoyed by the school community. This broadens pupils' understanding of Christianity as a living faith. On occasions governors attend collective worship, and feedback is shared with leaders. However, they do not evaluate the impact of provision robustly. Therefore, governors cannot be sure of the extent of pupils' spiritual development through engagement with worship.

RE reinforces the importance of the school's vision and is popular with pupils. Enquiry-based approaches and varied experiences challenge their thinking. Work on comparative religions promotes respect and a recognition that every individual is of value. In this way RE makes a distinct impact on the social, cultural and moral development of pupils. However, the inclusion of non-religious worldviews and explicit reference to spiritual development are not as embedded. Guests who represent various expressions of faith are welcomed into



school. Pupils visit places of worship linked to a range of beliefs. These actions promote the school's quest for inclusivity, helping pupils understand the impact personal beliefs have on those of faith. Additionally, trips to the school's local church reinforces pupils' understanding of Christianity's impact on Britain's cultural heritage.

Following a diocesan review of RE, the school is making positive and steady progress to move the subject forward. For example, there is now a whole school RE curriculum plan. Furthermore, staff who teach RE benefit from regular professional development. This means their confidence in delivering RE continues to grow. Additionally, their moderation of pupils' work enables a clearly defined progression in learning. However, formal systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the subject are less developed. This limits opportunities to challenge pupils' academic and spiritual growth within RE.

Leaders are proactive in addressing circumstances that might affect the community's mental health and wellbeing. They have created a harmonious environment in which good mental health and wellbeing is an area of strength. This is exemplified in the emotional and practical support offered to staff and the kindness shown to them during difficult times. Furthermore, wise decisions help to balance teachers' workload and family life. The school has trained mental health first aiders on site. These priorities reflect the importance attached to emotional wellbeing alongside the school's vision that all should flourish. Furthermore, staff have a clear focus on nurture for pupils. The care of both families and pupils who are vulnerable is strong. Hence, those experiencing difficult circumstances are well supported and issues are quickly addressed. Staff frequently go beyond their teaching roles in their availability to listen to and understand their community. New pupils are readily integrated and quickly become part of the school's extended family. Therefore, the vision's focus on family, future and flourish is a lived reality.

## Information

Address	Church Road, Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire, SL2 2AW		
Date	10 October 2024	URN	110435
Type of school	Maintained Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	252
Diocese	Oxford		
Headteacher	Shane Broderick		
Chair of Governors	Paul Randall		
Inspector	Delia Sheppard		