

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Banbury | |
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| Address | Southam Road, Banbury, OX16 2EG |
| School vision | |
| <p>Through God's love we will create an environment in which our children will learn, transform, and grow.</p> <p>Genesis 28:12 "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go."</p> | |
| School strengths | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear vision, which understands the school's context, is deeply known by all. It drives the strategic direction of the school. Decisions by leaders at all levels are made in the light of the vision. This in turn enables pupils and adults to flourish. • Support from governors and the Trust is effective and unwavering. This enables leaders to be relentless in living a vision which benefits all. • Dignity and respect are hallmarks of the school. Pupils and adults love one another unconditionally. They demonstrate this love through their actions and support for each other. • Collective worship provides a space for pupils and adults to reflect on their vision and values. As a result, they grow spiritually and are challenged to make a positive difference in and out of school. • Religious education (RE) provides a safe space for pupils to discuss ideas and secure new knowledge. Through the curriculum, pupils gain an understanding of core religious and non-religious concepts. | |
| Areas for development | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen the understanding of spirituality across the school. This is so that all can readily explore how pupils and adults grow spiritually. • Further embed the RE curriculum so that pupils gain a deeper understanding of how religious and non-religious beliefs impact on individuals. | |
| Inspection findings | |
| <p>Love and compassion are golden threads that bind everyone at St Mary's School together. The vision of 'Learning, Transforming, and Growing', is rooted in Genesis chapter 28. It is unwavering in the way it sustains and deeply impacts everyone within the community. Leaders truly understand the context in which they work. As a result, they relentlessly ensure that the vision is central to all decisions they make. This creates a culture where everyone is included and treated as unique individuals, known and loved by all. The supportive governing body know and articulate the vision well, ensuring that it is a central part of every meeting held. Governors believe deeply in the vision and recognise how important it is to school development. Their understanding of the school's vision</p> | |

and context underpinned the decision to join the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust. This has enabled the school to continue to grow and transform lives in their community. Governors monitor the impact of the vision effectively, offering challenge, which in turn drives future developments. Apart from the Trust other partnerships have a positive impact on enabling pupils and adults to thrive. Work with another school has facilitated the sharing of expertise and extended the vision's impact. In addition, the school, and the local church work together to support the community. For example, providing essential items for people seeking asylum. As well as assisting with collective worship, the church provides pastoral care for adults, which contributes to their wellbeing.

The curriculum is deeply and deliberately linked to the school's vision. In every topic and lesson concepts are identified that show what pupils will learn. They also identify how they will grow and be transformed as individuals. Leaders have carefully mapped these concepts across year groups and monitor them closely. As a result, leaders have a profound understanding of how the vision impacts the curriculum. Topics and texts are wisely chosen to reflect the community in which the school sits. Texts such as 'The Island' and 'The Promise' have challenged pupils to transform and develop their writing skills. Furthermore, the texts have put learning into a real-life context. This has led pupils to challenge how they show love in the world and plant 'seeds' to make the world a better place. For example, pupils made sandwiches in design and technology. They were adamant that the food should not be thrown away but used to feed the birds. In addition, extra-curricular activities are planned so that pupils have experiences beyond their existing opportunities. These include taking pupils to explore the local canals and rivers, as well as encouraging pupils through sport. This has resulted pupils having a deeper understanding of the world around them. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive in the school. Leaders ensure that needs of the individual are met through loving kindness.

Carefully planned opportunities throughout the curriculum ensure that pupils flourish spiritually. Through their learning pupils reflect on its personal impact, as well as aspects that are bigger than themselves. 'WOW' moments, such as going to the theatre, or to the beach provide the means for pupils and adults to grow spiritually. This is because leaders have an uncompromising pursuit of rich experiences that pupils would not ordinarily encounter. In turn this has a positive influence on pupils' ability to thrive spiritually and academically. Although the school seeks to provide opportunities for spiritual growth, a shared language around spirituality is not fully developed.

Collective worship is an intrinsic part of school life where pupils and adults grow spiritually. Pupils value this time together to stop, think and reflect. Worship is highly inclusive as pupils and adults with all faiths, and none can be present and worship in their own way. Older pupils sit next to younger pupils which extends the understanding of 'koinonia' (community), bringing people together. Themes are effectively planned around the vision and values ensuring pupils and adults reflect deeply. This has created a culture where pupils love one another unconditionally. All are presented with big questions to ponder and reflect on during the week. These questions promote action among pupils. They rise to these challenges considering how they can have a positive impact on their locality. As a result, pupils have improved the local wildlife by planting wildflowers and supported local homelessness charities. Thus, they are living out the vision in transforming the lives of others.

Dignity and respect are hallmarks of this diverse school community. Values of compassion, truth and koinonia are a shared, lived experience allowing all to live well together. Pupils talk about how they are a family, and how they love one another. One pupil said, "We all unite together, sometimes we fall apart, but we stick together like a family." Furthermore, a calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades throughout the school leading to exemplary pupil behaviour. This is particularly evident during outdoor play sessions. Pupils create rules and play together in a fair and harmonious way, living well together. This is because the vision is widely known and applied. The impact of

transformation is far reaching across St Mary's. The mental health and wellbeing of pupils and adults is a high priority in the school. Staff express how leaders look out for their wellbeing and ensure that they grow both personally and professionally. The trust has provided headteachers with resilience training, which has in turn fostered successful support of the staff team. Each person is treated as an individual, who has unique skills and abilities which are valued. This means that leaders take time to understand adults and support their development through their personal interests.

The RE curriculum is well planned and provides opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of religious and non-religious worldviews. Pupils discuss their views in a safe environment and show respect for one another's opinions. The subject leader regularly attends training with the Diocese. This has ensured that RE has a high priority in the school and staff are well equipped to teach it. This is supported by the Trust through curriculum visits and funding Diocesan support packages. Pupils have a clear understanding of concepts from a range of religious and non-religious beliefs. However, their understanding of the impact of these beliefs on the life of individuals is less well developed.

The inspection findings indicate that St Mary's Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

| Information | | | |
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| Inspection date | 9 May 2024 | URN | 144872 |
| VC/VA/Academy | Academy | Pupils on roll | 225 |
| Diocese | Oxford | | |
| MAT/Federation | Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust | | |
| Executive Headteacher | Victoria Woods | | |
| Chair | Maureen Thompson | | |
| Inspector | Duncan Hutchison | No. | 2119 |