

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

## The Marlborough Church of England Secondary School

### Vision

At The Marlborough Church of England School, Woodstock, we are a learning community that is committed to excellence in all we do. We believe in the enrichment of the whole person and that every individual has the right to the best possible education. We are ambitious, rigorous, uncompromising and academically outstanding, and make sure our young people are nurtured, cherished and cared for. Our school cannot simply be measured by outcomes alone, but by the people it helps to shape. As a Church School, we are open to those of all faiths, and those of none. Our vision is rooted in the Biblical narrative expressed in Matthew 5:16, "let your light shine".

### Strengths

- The Christian vision fundamentally drives the work of the school as a Church school. It enables adults and pupils to flourish as they 'let their light shine'. As a result, the whole school community is proud to live together.
- The inclusive culture within the school, which stems from the vision, is exceptional. Consequently, pupils thrive as they discover their God-given uniqueness.
- The ambition and support for pupils, especially the most vulnerable, is impressive. This enables pupils to shine as valued members of the 'Marlborough Family'.
- Daily inspirational and inclusive opportunities for reflection and prayer enable pupils to think deeply and develop spiritually. This is a result of the well-considered collective worship programme.
- The school shines brightly as a beacon of hope and excellence within the wider community. As part of The River Learning Trust it balances its support for Church school development beyond itself with the championing of social justice causes locally.

### Development Points

- Embed the recent changes to the curriculum for core religious education (RE) in the 6<sup>th</sup> form. This is so that all pupils continue to receive high quality RE throughout their schooling.
- Develop the explicit language of spirituality within the curriculum. This is so that pupils are able to talk about their spiritual development journey more precisely.



## Inspection Findings

The Christian vision 'let your light shine', rooted in Matthew 5:16, is the foundation of the school's work as a Church school. Leaders, including governors and the trust, are inspirational in their ambition and outworking of the vision. They act to make sure pupils succeed academically and personally as shining lights. Within and beyond the wider trust, the school is spearheading Church school development work through its highly effective networks. Not only does this result in bold curriculum decisions; it also impacts upon the wellbeing of adults and pupils in other schools. The Marlborough School is truly living out its vision to shape the lives of those who encounter its work.

The school values of respect, perseverance and ambition are the lived expression of the vision. They drive the high-quality support pupils receive in their learning. Consequently, adults have high aspirations for what pupils can achieve both academically and through extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils thrive as a result of the support given to them and relish the opportunity for academic success. As a result, academic outcomes are strong. Furthermore, the work of the school to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is inspirational. It is an example of truly Christ-like Christian service and care for all God's children. Dedicated staff express the love of God through the compassion and support they show, enabling impressive individual outcomes. Alternative pathways result in personal success and achievement. This is because the school works hard to ensure they are inclusive and, sometimes, individually tailored. More widely, the extensive extra-curricular life of the school encourages pupils to develop in their wider talents. Consequently, many pupils readily participate in school shows and performances. Such opportunities not only enable pupils to develop their own sense of identity but are intrinsic to pupils' wider spiritual development.

RE is given high priority by leaders, including within the wider trust. As a result of the school appointing dedicated RE specialists, the curriculum is exceptionally well planned and sequenced. Therefore, RE is greatly valued by pupils. Christianity is presented as a diverse, global and living faith. As a result, pupils actively consider concepts such as baptism, and the person of Jesus, through different cultural lenses. Exploring a range of religions and worldviews through a diverse curriculum enables pupils to appreciate the multi-cultural world around them. They see themselves as global citizens. Furthermore, the RE curriculum provides ongoing opportunities for pupils to consider their personal views and opinions on complex moral themes. Therefore, it makes a highly effective contribution to pupils' personal, social, moral and spiritual development. At Key Stage 5 there is opportunity to study RE at A Level. For those pupils who do not take RE A Level there is an emerging core curriculum. This ensures all pupils within the 6<sup>th</sup> form continue to receive high quality RE. This is in the early stages of implementation and so is not yet fully embedded.

Central to the life of the school is the diverse collective worship programme. The carefully considered inclusive opportunities for prayer, silence and reflection are highly valued by pupils. This is strengthened by the strong partnerships forged with local churches and the diocese. Therefore, worship and reflection



are an intrinsic part of daily life at The Marlborough School. Leaders' investment in highly effective chaplaincy work has enhanced this further. The school extends this work to local primary schools as a key part of the transition process for Year 6 pupils. Alongside the chaplain, pupils lead collective worship for the entire school and develop opportunities for others to explore the Christian faith further. As a result, they create valued prayer spaces, design inspirational liturgical celebration assemblies and lead the Christian Union. Therefore, pupils are developing spiritually through varied opportunities for worship. However, this is less well developed within the academic curriculum which lacks an explicit language for spiritual development.

Inspired by the collective worship programme, the school demonstrates the vision through works of service to others. The desire of pupils and staff to support their communities extends to wide-ranging social action. Often pupil initiated, the impact upon the school and local community is wonderfully tangible. Sustainability projects have resulted in water fountains being installed. The annual fun-run, food bank initiatives and wider charities week work contribute significantly to local, national and international causes. Equally, pupils are confident to stand up for causes of justice and social responsibility. They proudly act as ambassadors within the school and beyond. Pupils point to the school vision and values as the inspiration for this work and see themselves as agents of change.

The school has cultivated a wonderfully inclusive culture and each child is treasured for their unique worth. Leaders intentionally shape pupils' attitudes through the character programme that stems from the vision. This enables them to think deeply about their own value and the worth of others. Pupils are taught what it means to be part of the 'Marlborough Family' and to be respectful and caring. They discover what it means to 'shine their light' as they explore new activities that develop their character and talents. This means they also feel known and valued by adults for their uniqueness. Equally, through the school's 'Electives' programme, 6<sup>th</sup> form pupils choose to mentor younger pupils both in and out of lessons. As a result, the entire school community lives well together. The wellbeing of both adults and pupils is central to the culture of the trust and the school. Adults are proud to work at the school and feel the way they are cared for is central to this. Not only does the support for adults impact upon the school community, but the school is becoming a beacon of hope beyond itself. This is particularly evident in its wellbeing support for families and across other trust schools. The fundamental principle that if you treat adults well then they will, in turn, look after children well is a lived reality. This extends to spiritual wellbeing. Here, the chaplain offers highly valued support to adults as well as pupils should they request it. The extensive pastoral support and wonderful chaplaincy work ensures pupils and adults are well cared for.

## Information

Address	Shipton Road, Woodstock, OX20 1LP		
Date	11 November 2024	URN	138817
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	1086
Diocese/District	Oxford		
MAT/Federation	The River Learning Trust		
Headteacher	Andrew Hanlon		
Chair of Governors	Valerie Munro and Kate Pick		
Inspector	Sadie Batstone		