

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Nicolas Church of England Junior School

Vision

‘For the good of all, through curiosity, creativity and love.’

Our vision is underpinned by the values of curiosity, creativity and love, which are at the core of our school, our learning and our care for each other.

‘The spirit’s presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.’ 1 Corinthians 12:7.

St Nicolas Church of England Junior 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.

Notable Strengths

- The embedded Christian vision underpins the strategic decisions that leaders make. As a result, pupils and adults at St Nicolas Junior School flourish in a loving and creative environment.
- The vision inspires an approach to learning that ignites pupils’ curiosity and deepens their understanding of the world. Consequently, they develop a wide range of skills and knowledge.
- Collective worship is a central and valued part of school life. It contributes significantly to the spiritual growth of the school community.
- A commitment to ‘the good of all’ shapes daily routines and relationships, creating an inclusive culture. Pupils who encounter additional challenges receive tailored support, enabling them to flourish alongside their peers.

Development Points

- Enhance pupils’ understanding of social justice. This is so that they appreciate how they can make a positive difference in other people’s lives.
- Provide wider opportunities for pupils to engage with Christianity as a diverse and global faith. This is to help pupils understand how Christian beliefs, practices and worship vary across cultures and traditions worldwide.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

Leaders take their inspiration from St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians. The Christian vision, for the good of all, informs their key decisions that shape the school's planning and priority-setting. For example, establishing a nurture room enhances pupils' wellbeing. This calm space allows them time to self-regulate and begin the day quietly, benefiting the whole school community. Guided by compassion, staff work closely with families, offering them practical support. Consequently, parents describe consistent care and guidance, particularly appreciating the prompt handling of concerns. School leaders, including governors, monitor and evaluate the impact of the vision, taking action as a result. For instance, the decision to fund specialist staff provides effective support for pupils with additional needs and professional advice for their parents. This makes the vision a living reality, ensuring that members of the school community can flourish.

Vision and Curriculum

Leaders express the vision through the curriculum with a resolute focus on the values of curiosity and creativity. The rich, broad and inclusive learning programme meets the needs of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders tailor provision through targeted interventions and individual support, enabling pupils to benefit fully from the opportunities available. Participation in 'Young Voices,' for example, gives pupils the opportunity to enjoy singing at major arenas. Spirituality is an intrinsic part of the curriculum, recognised by members of the school community as 'wow' moments. Pupils also experience these moments through the school's wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sports and the arts. Trips and residential visits challenge pupils to persevere as they tackle unfamiliar activities such as body zorbing, abseiling and axe throwing. An annual international day is especially popular with pupils and parents. This brings families together to celebrate and share their cultures through food, national dress and fellowship. Together, these opportunities create memorable and joyful experiences that support spiritual flourishing.

Worship and Spirituality

Worship is a special time when the school comes together to reflect on the vision through inspirational themes, Bible stories and music. Pupils and adults gain an understanding of its meaning and purpose because they actively engage with stimulating, thought-provoking ideas. This is evident when pupils explore the parable of the Wise Man and the Foolish Man. Found in the gospels of St Matthew and St Luke, the story teaches the importance of strong foundations. Worship opens with a welcome that reflects and celebrates the diverse nature of St Nicolas' community. Greetings such as the Christian welcome of 'Peace be with you,' as well as 'As-salamu alaykum' or 'Namaste,' make worship inclusive of the school community. Singing is a powerful feature that contributes to pupils' spiritual flourishing. Reflection time enables members of the community to be still, wonder, and connect with others and with God. The phrase, 'go in peace and act for the good of all' is recited at the end of worship. This further emphasises the words in 1 Corinthians. The partnership with the local church is strong, enriching both collective worship and the spiritual journey of the school community. Visits to the church throughout the year immerse the school community in Christian worship, and traditions.

Vision and School Culture

St Nicolas is an inclusive school where the vision inspires a strong culture of acceptance and respect. Pupils from varied backgrounds and with a range of needs are warmly welcomed. They are valued for their individuality and treated with dignity. This helps to build trusting, respectful relationships. Guided by the vision, leaders support staff wellbeing by listening to feedback and responding thoughtfully. Simple measures, such as providing treats and keeping meetings concise, promote work-life balance and a respectful culture. Regular professional development strengthens staff knowledge and practice, enabling them to meet pupils' needs more effectively. As a result, they benefit from consistently high-quality teaching and support that help them flourish. A strong sense of belonging permeates the school, supported by a well-established network of mutual care. The corridor's belonging tree display reinforces this shared commitment. Leaders ensure that



every pupil can access the same opportunities, regardless of circumstance, and have introduced effective measures to achieve this.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

In keeping with its vision, the school encourages pupils to act justly and take responsibility for the good of others. Pupils use their talents for the common wellbeing through community-focused work, such as singing at settings nearby. Also, national and local charities, including the West Berkshire foodbank, are supported. A wide range of leadership roles are undertaken, such as serving on the school council, joining the Green Team and acting as worship or team leaders. These opportunities enable pupils to influence school life and take pride in contributing to the wellbeing of others. The school also looks beyond its immediate community by building positive partnerships. Strong engagement with the diocese keeps leaders informed about developments and initiatives in Church school education. Mutually beneficial links with the federated infant school allow both communities to participate in events throughout the year. They particularly enjoy the shared weekly celebration. Through sustainability weeks and environmental initiatives, pupils learn how their choices affect the environment. They take practical steps to reduce food waste and the use of electricity and water. However, their understanding of justice and responsibility in a wider context is less secure.

Religious Education

Leaders give religious education (RE) a high priority. It is taught weekly by class teachers who monitor the subject as rigorously as other subjects. Regular professional development informs staff about its content and delivery. The well-resourced, enquiry-based curriculum provides a clear and engaging structure for learning. Pupils explore challenging, meaningful themes about life, belief, faith and values. Each unit provides regular opportunities to consider deeper questions, such as 'How do people act for the good of all?' Inspired by the vision, this approach develops pupils' curiosity, critical thinking and personal understanding. Adapted provision enables those with additional needs to access the curriculum successfully. Studying a range of religions and worldviews helps to develop an understanding of the multicultural world around them. However, pupils have less awareness of Christianity as a richly diverse global faith.

Engaging RE lessons help pupils learn to respect and listen to different viewpoints. Effective feedback and marking ensures teachers track individual progress and identify appropriate next steps. Carefully adapted activities ensure that both more able pupils and those with additional needs participate successfully. Leaders regularly monitor and evaluate RE, providing focused guidance that strengthens teaching and supports accurate assessment.

Information

Address	Link Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 7LU		
Date	16 September 2026	URN	110013
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	244
Diocese	Oxford		
Federation	St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation		
Executive Headteacher	Keith Harvey		
Head of School	Louise Thornton-Allen		
Chair of Governors	Sian Williams		
Inspector	Jenny Earp		