

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. Mary's Church of England Primary School

Vision

'We believe, we achieve, we succeed in God's family.'

With God, all things are possible. Matthew 19:26

St Mary's Church of England Primary 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 Christian vision, lived out through core school values, is deeply embedded influencing decisions and actions. Pupils and adults recognise how it relates to their own lives binding the community and driving a desire to grow together. As a consequence, they are able to thrive.
- Shaped by the school vision, a well-developed and purposeful curriculum meets the diverse needs of pupils. Inclusion is at its heart and serves to ensure that pupils grow and flourish.
- Inspirational collective worship contributes to staff and pupils' ability to reflect deeply on their own lives and those of others. In this way it has a significant impact on the school community and developing their spirituality.
- Pastoral care and a focus on wellbeing are palpable and an effective outworking of the school vision of nurture and inclusion. Pupils across the school watch out for each other with love and care.
- Religious education (RE) is carefully planned, sequenced and adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. This provides them with a broad study of Christianity and a range of faiths and worldviews. As a result, pupils respect and value the views of others.

Development Points

- Widen opportunities for critical thinking in RE to support deeper exploration and reflection on personal responses.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

St. Mary's is a caring and inclusive school that is warm and welcoming. The Christian vision, underpinned by six core values, is securely embedded and understood by pupils and adults. Governors, leaders, staff and the wider community work together to uphold these values. They shape daily experiences, foster a shared commitment to high standards promoting personal growth. Each pupil is deeply known, valued and celebrated as a unique individual, enabling them to achieve well regardless of their starting points. Barriers to learning are removed allowing pupils to achieve and develop well. This provides a sense of belonging. Leaders model the vision with integrity. They ensure it actively guides behaviour, relationships and decision-making. Governors and trust leaders know the school well, providing effective support and challenge. A broad and bespoke curriculum has been designed that raises aspirations and builds character. It inspires pupils to become courageous, kind and thoughtful. As a result, pupils flourish and are prepared for life.

Vision and Curriculum

In line with the vision, leaders have established a bespoke curriculum that responds to the context of the school. It is broad, ensuring pupils have equal access to rich opportunities to thrive. Adaptations are made thoughtfully so learning is accessible, enabling pupils to participate fully and achieve well. Pupils demonstrate an acceptance of difference, supporting one another with kindness and respect. For example, they listen attentively, allowing time for peers to respond and encouraging those who have not yet spoken. Explicit opportunities to develop spirituality are woven through the curriculum. Pupils explore big questions, reflect deeply, and grow in understanding of themselves and others. The inclusion of a forest school approach enriches the curriculum. Consequently, providing creative and practical experiences that foster resilience, teamwork and a strong connection to the natural world. This ensures pupils are equipped with the knowledge, skills and character to flourish both within and beyond the school. This embodies the vision that with God all things are possible.

Worship and Spirituality

Highly valued collective worship is central to the life of St Mary's. It provides an inspirational and uplifting start to each day, shaping the school's ethos and sets a purposeful tone. Biblical texts are used thoughtfully and linked to real situations. This enables pupils to apply Christian teaching in meaningful ways. For example, pupils reflected on Jesus' choice of disciples when considering how they might select members of a group. This develops their understanding of Christian values in action. Worship creates a calm, reflective space. Prayer is integral, with the school and Lord's Prayer included. Accordingly, pupils engage with confidence and reflect deeply. Spiritual development is threaded throughout, enabling pupils to ask questions and grow in self-awareness, empathy and moral understanding. The lighting of candles and singing help to create a sense of reverence and belonging. Staff participate fully, drawing inspiration that shapes their practice. Pupil prayer leaders plan and lead aspects, strengthening ownership and confidence. Pupils respond respectfully, fostering cohesion and shared identity. Thus, relationships are strengthened with a shared purpose leading to nurtured wellbeing. Pupils grow as compassionate individuals who contribute positively to school and community.

Church School Ethos and Culture

Rooted in the school's vision, each person is treated with dignity and fairness. This is seen in restorative approaches and inclusive practices that nurture belonging. Staff model respect and kindness, shaping how pupils relate to one another. Consequently, relationships are warm and supportive, creating a culture where everyone feels safe, valued and cared for, regardless of background or belief. Trust leaders and governors know the school well. They provide support and challenge, ensuring the Christian vision is lived out. For example, leaders prioritise inclusion, shaping policies, relationships and provision for all pupils. The impact is a culture where individuals feel accepted and valued. Pupils' voice is prioritised, their repeated affirmation that "*our voice matters*" shows genuine empowerment, fostering responsibility, empathy and consideration. The vision drives



actions such as pupils supporting one another and celebrating successes. This makes a significant impact on respecting differences, relationships and behaviour which is good. Strong church links, with clergy leading worship and hosting key festivals, deepens pupils' spiritual understanding. Trust leaders support pupils, staff and the wider community with encouragement and challenge that reflect the school's vision. As a result, relationships are strengthened and the wellbeing of all is actively nurtured.

Justice and Responsibility

The vision at St. Mary's actively shapes a culture of justice and responsibility. Pupils are encouraged to take ownership of their actions and demonstrate fairness, honesty and respect across school life. A wide range of responsibilities are available giving pupils opportunities to contribute positively to the school community. Being responsible for others in the wider world is demonstrated through wrapping presents for children at Waisi Primary school in Ghana. Pupils express their understanding of justice as fairness, ensuring respect is high profile. This is seen when they stand up for others and resolve disagreements fairly. Adults model these values consistently, reinforcing justice and responsibility through daily routines, worship and the curriculum. As a result, pupils develop a strong moral compass, act with integrity and empathy, and recognise responsibilities within school and beyond.

Religious Education

RE is thoughtfully planned, sequenced and regularly reviewed. It offers a broad study of Christianity and a range of faiths and worldviews, promoting respect and understanding. Reflection areas in shared spaces reinforce RE's profile. This supports spiritual growth through opportunities to pause, think and connect learning with deeper meaning. RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It enables pupils to develop as compassionate, thoughtful members of the school and wider community.

RE is taught with skill and purpose. Lessons are engaging, inclusive and adapted so pupils access learning and achieve well. They make significant progress, shown through secure knowledge revisited over time. Discussion and debate are strong features, enabling pupils to engage thoughtfully and apply their learning. For example, pupils explore theological and ethical concepts such as suffering or belief formation with growing confidence. Assessment tracks progress, informs planning and provides targeted support. As a result, teaching is effective. They connect biblical teaching with life and apply learning confidently. There is scope to deepen these opportunities, ensuring critical thinking is consistently embedded and personal responses explored more fully. Professional development through the trust and diocese strengthens teachers' knowledge and confidence. The impact of this is consistently strong teaching and learning across the school.

Information

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| Address | Main Road, Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford, CM3 8RJ | | |
| Date | 17 September 2025 | URN | 147878 |
| Type of school | Academy | No. of pupils | 52 |
| Diocese | Chelmsford | | |
| MAT/Federation | Berlesduna Academy Trust | | |
| MAT Chair | Robin Taverner | | |
| Headteacher | Theresa Walker | | |
| Chair of Governors | Robin Taverner | | |
| Inspector | Anthony Cosans | | |