

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Vision

'Love your neighbour as you love yourself' from the parable of The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:27-37)

This inspires us to be the best version of ourselves in order that we may flourish, mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually; serve others and live life in all its fullness.

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 compelling and deeply embedded Christian vision, expressed through intrinsically linked values, inspires a powerful culture of welcome and inclusion. It drives decisions ensuring significant positive impact for pupils and adults.
- Positive relationships are central to the school's work, offering authentic care and compassion. The school staff work collaboratively and closely as a team with pupils at the heart of their work. This ensures adults and pupils flourish and feel valued and listened to.
- Strong, effective leadership in religious education (RE) ensures the subject has a high profile and is well resourced. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic learners who confidently ask and respond to questions and creatively share their ideas.
- Collective worship is highly appreciated and has positive impact on participants. Careful planning creates a rich variety of invitational opportunities for reflection and spiritual growth for adults and pupils.
- Pupils develop a deep sense of who they are through a significant range of experiences and responsibilities available to all. They eagerly play a full part in communal school life, growing in self-confidence and their personal understanding of spirituality.

Development Points

- Develop learning experiences in RE further to include intentional links to deeper religious concepts. This is to enable pupils to communicate their understanding with greater clarity and make stronger links across worldviews and religions.
- Enhance pupils' understanding of how to challenge injustice so they have a greater confidence to be change makers. This is to empower them to build on their existing passion and drive, leading to pupil-led opportunities to act.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

Formed from the story of the Good Samaritan, the school's Christian vision radiates through every aspect of daily life. Five carefully selected values, taken directly from the story, shape an ethos where inclusive relationships are prioritised. Leaders and governors are relentlessly focused on building a confident community of pupils who care about themselves and others. As a result, pupils and adults flourish by striving to be the best versions of themselves. Strong partnerships with the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Multi Academy Trust, the community and diocese enrich the school's work. For example, school staff benefit from high-quality training, while also offering expert advice as a trust hub lead school. Governors and trust leaders know the school well and effectively support, challenge and encourage leadership. There is a strong resonance between the trust's vision and that of the school, whilst maintaining St Mary's uniqueness. The resultant clear strategic direction empowers school leaders to make decisions that benefit pupils and staff.

Vision and Curriculum

The curriculum, underpinned by the Christian vision and reflective of the school's context, offers challenge and creativity. The school values are skilfully woven into creative lessons, ensuring pupils use them as powerful tools to support their success. Leaders are passionate about developing high aspirations through inclusive and motivating learning opportunities, adapted to meet the needs of pupils. Great care is taken to support and nurture those who may be vulnerable, ensuring that they, too, can thrive. For example, the school day is individualised to pupils with special education needs to reduce anxiety and support participation. This means pupils learn well because they receive the help needed for them to flourish academically. Pupil's interests and achievements are nurtured and celebrated through an impressively wide range of learning experiences, clubs and trips. Activities like the school orchestra, drama club, reading gladiators, running and football clubs serve to broaden pupil's horizons. They supplement the many opportunities for spiritual development, blending deliberately planned moments of awe with ordinary activities of the day.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship is at the heart of school life, offering a daily moment of calm contemplation and thought-provoking reflection. Demonstrating their high regard for this time, pupils feel it makes their school 'a better place because we come together'. Adults value this time as a chance to be a community in a busy day. Weekly themes reflect Christian festivals and the school's vision, ensuring pupils encounter a broad and rich experience of Christian traditions. Through the faith council, pupils relish the chance to create acts of worship, using stories, drama and music. This enables them to develop confidence and ownership over the values. Partnerships with the local church community are strong and mutually beneficial. Clergy and valued visitors, such as the Open the Book team, enrich worship and enhance opportunities for spiritual growth. For example, members of the parish create inspirational displays in school to prompt deeper reflection and biblical understanding. Well-used reflection areas, such as the prayer tree, offer opportunities for calm contemplation or personal prayer throughout the day. There is a clear definition of spirituality, using the imagery of windows, mirrors and doors to consider the impact of experiences. As a result, pupils are beginning to articulate their spiritual growth with increasing confidence.

Vision and School Culture

Inspired by the vision, leaders have created a culture where people are treated exceptionally well. The values form an effective framework through which caring relationships that foster respect are prioritised. This atmosphere of nurture and welcome ensures everyone is encouraged to recognise each other as a neighbour. As a result, pupils encourage one another to be kind and helpful, resolving difficulties quickly and often without adult support. Strategies, such as 'zones of regulation', provide frameworks for pupils to understand the links between emotions and behaviour. The school's emotional literacy support assistant offers planned and in the moment support for pupils and staff. This enhances pupils' sense of being loved and nurtured. Staff are a closely knit team and enable each other to give their best through an open atmosphere of support. Leaders look for meaningful opportunities to support staff wellbeing through partnerships with the trust and local charities. For



example, leaders arranged workshops for pupils, parents and staff through the charity Mind aimed at helping individuals personally. In turn, adults and pupils feel equipped to face times of need with confidence they will receive whatever support required.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

A deep understanding of the vision and their role within it inspires pupils to act with responsibility towards others. Leaders enable pupils to have a significant number of meaningful responsibilities across the school. For example, the safeguarding team led the school response to anti-bullying, aiming to 'keep people safe in and out of school'. Play leaders use their roles to ensure younger children have a positive time at breaktimes and feel like they belong. The school council collectively acts for school improvement through initiatives like raising awareness of and money for playground recycling bins. Consequently, pupils develop a deep sense of responsibility to act as role models for one another. Individual classes take on challenges, known as 'Archie's Challenge', within the school. As a result, pupils confidently identify and explain the impact they have on their school community in many ways. They learn to understand injustice, through safe spaces provided in classrooms to share views and explore global issues. However, pupils' opportunities to respond to such issues themselves are not fully established. This limits awareness of their own potential to act as agents of change.

Religious Education

As a result of expert leadership, RE has a high profile and is both valued and enjoyed by pupils. Leaders have ensured the curriculum provides a strong balance between teaching about Christianity and a range of religions and worldviews. It is well-sequenced, offering pupils challenging, relevant and diverse content, using creative approaches so pupils can build on prior knowledge. Governors regularly monitor RE, often jointly with the diocesan advisor, to ensure it meets pupils' needs and school expectations. As a result, they are well-informed about standards and can provide strategic support to make certain it is well-resourced.

Teaching in RE is strong, enabling pupils to achieve well. They speak enthusiastically about RE and find the subject interesting and challenging. They are proud of their work and make good progress, which is carefully tracked through innovative assessment and monitoring. Lessons offer a safe place to discuss wide ranging issues and viewpoints. This empowers pupils to explore their own beliefs while appreciating those of others. Scrap books capture an impressive range of learning opportunities, and pupil workbooks demonstrate their increasingly deep understanding of religion. Probing questions support pupils to make links across religions and worldviews, however, these are often focussed on simple comparisons. Consequently, pupils are not aware of concepts, limiting their understanding of religion's role in people's lives. Training is offered flexibly, making good use of available resources through diocesan support. This enables teachers to grow in their confidence to teach RE well, and build on their own understanding over time.

Information

Address	Burkitt Road, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 4JJ		
Date	20 November 2025	URN	142598
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	201
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich		
MAT/Federation	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Multi Academy Trust		
MAT Chair	Andrew Blit		
Headteacher	Karen Read		
Chair of Governors	Catherine Banthorpe		
Inspector	Philip Asher		