

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary and St Giles Church of England Primary School

Address St Mary and St Giles Church of England Primary
King George Crescent,
Stony Stratford,
Milton Keynes, MK11 1EF

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish

Overall grade **Good**

The impact of collective worship **Good**

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) **Good**

School's vision

Our aim is for all to belong to a safe and happy community which celebrates our diversity and differences. Our children will be well prepared for the next step of their journey as responsible citizens. We aspire for all to flourish. Every child is a gift from God. (Psalm 127:3)

Key findings

- The school has been through a time of major uncertainty and has now converted to academy status. The support of the Diocese, governors and academy leaders have been key to improving outcomes for this school.
- The school's vision is successfully woven into everyday life and leads to high expectations for learning. High quality learning opportunities continued during the pandemic when the school was closed or partially closed. Support for vulnerable families was significant during this period.
- The school has a statement of spirituality that complements its distinctly Christian vision. It has a positive impact on pupils' thinking and questioning.
- Religious education (RE) has a positive impact on pupils' learning of Christianity and different faiths which coherently reflects the school's vision.
- Collective worship is inclusive, in line with the vision, and enjoyed by the pupils. Not all pupils have the opportunity to plan, lead or evaluate collective worship.

Areas for development

- Governors to ensure there is a rigorous system in place to monitor the impact of the vision upon collective worship and spirituality.
- Develop ways for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship thus deepening their spiritual awareness and understanding of prayer and worship.
- Continue to plan opportunities for pupils' spiritual growth throughout the curriculum and within the context of the school's vision.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

St Mary and St Giles (SMSG) Primary School has been through a time of great adversity. Nonetheless it has emerged confidently as a safe and happy community which clearly expresses its distinctive Christian vision. Governors understand the needs of the school and ensure that the school's vision underpins decisions made at a strategic level. All leaders have worked tirelessly to improve outcomes for pupils.

SMSG is situated on two sites with diverse communities. Leaders ensure equivalent, appropriately delivered, provision is provided at each location. Exceptional leadership from the headteacher and deputy headteachers has secured a stable and highly motivated staff team. Their passion is the wellbeing and development of the pupils in their care. Their dedication aptly expresses the school's vision that 'Every child is a gift from God' (Psalm 127:3).

The school has recently joined 'Inspiring Futures Through Learning' (IFtL), a multi-academy trust. IFtL has worked diligently, throughout the conversion process, to maintain the conditions of the school's original trust deed. The Diocesan Board of Education's support of the conversion process has ensured that the school's distinctively Christian nature remains paramount. Working together, leaders have raised the profile of the school amongst parents and the wider community that the school serves. Parents who have had children at SMSG over a longer period of time recognised marked improvement on attitudes within the school. They say that kindness underpins the school's leadership and that this makes the school welcoming to all. In this way the school vision permeates throughout the school to create an atmosphere conducive to learning.

Leaders have taken concerted action to provide education throughout the pandemic. Children of key workers and those in vulnerable circumstances have had the opportunity to continue to come into school. Furthermore, SMSG supported families in need by providing food parcels and social care. The school's social worker was in daily contact, either online or face to face, with families who needed additional support. Effective in-person and remote learning enable pupils to engage with their lessons and make academic progress. This is because every pupil is considered important at SMSG and opportunities for them to flourish are sought.

Behaviour at SMSG is calm and respectful. Pupils readily explain that, although they may be from diverse backgrounds, they are 'friends with everyone'. This attitude is enhanced through opportunities to explore different faiths practised by families in the school community. Additionally, staff of all faiths say they feel comfortable and supported at SMSG. They have safe places to pray, and they enjoy sharing their faith during religious education (RE) lessons.

There is a strong commitment to RE expressed by the headteacher and the governors. RE lessons are well planned and taught. During the pandemic these lessons continued online. Good use of technological resources and active discussions ensure that teaching relates well to the pupils' daily lives. Pupils enjoy RE lessons because they challenge their thinking and widen their experiences. This supports the school vision by preparing pupils for the next step on their journey as responsible citizens. RE progress is clearly evidenced.

Leaders have received training delivered by the Diocese to support their knowledge of spirituality within a church school context. The school now has a clear definition of spirituality relevant to its community and reflecting its distinctive Christian vision. Displays around the school complement this. They are created to foster pupils' natural inquisitiveness about who they are in the context of the wider world. Leaders have begun the process of creating opportunities for spiritual growth within the broader curriculum. However, spirituality is not fully embedded within the curriculum which means that moments of spiritual awareness are not always captured. In addition, the school has limited areas set aside for pupils to develop their spirituality through prayer or reflection.

The school has recently redesigned its curriculum. The curriculum is now well planned, topic based, and applicable to the school community. High quality and exciting displays in classrooms and corridors enhance curriculum learning. Staff have assessed pupils' prior subject knowledge accurately leading to good online teaching during the pandemic. The changes to the curriculum and online teaching encompass the school vision allowing pupils to flourish, even in times of adversity.

Collective worship is held in high regard. It is invitational and readily attended by the school community, including those of different faiths or no faith. Parents say they appreciate the 'moral compass' that collective worship provides for their

children. Staff have received Diocesan training and modelling of collective worship. As a result, pupils are beginning to experience a wider range of worship styles. They are more able to participate in ways that support their spiritual development. During collective worship some pupils contribute prayers, but pupils do not lead, plan, or evaluate worship. Pupils' spiritual development through deeper involvement in worship is therefore limited.

Local clergy are not available to support the school at present. Furthermore, the current inability to access St Mary and St Giles Church limits the pupils' experience of Anglican traditions. Notwithstanding these hardships, opportunities for some church visits, including Harvest Festival, have been created by school leaders. This has been much appreciated by the whole community. Local residents shared with governors their delight in seeing pupils return to church. Parents explained how much they and their children enjoyed these occasions. To this end, attending church together has had a restorative impact on the whole community.

During the pandemic, pupils became involved with charity projects organised by the village community. Additionally, the school supports a variety of national charities. Through engaging with such activities pupils are beginning to understand that they can be advocates for change within their community and beyond. They are developing a growing understanding of what is right and wrong and are learning to act accordingly. These opportunities agree well with the school's vision to support pupils to become responsible citizens.

Good mental health and wellbeing is a strength of the school and is highly valued by all. Relationships are cultivated to enable healing and hope, particularly in relation to the school's recent unsettled history and the pandemic. Through sustained effort SMSG has created a community that celebrates, in accordance with its vision, each member's inherent worth. Their passion to treat every child as a unique gift from God (Psalm 127:3) has created an inclusive community where all can flourish.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

RE is a strength of the school. It is well led and popular with pupils. Enquiry based approaches and rich and varied experiences challenge their thinking. Across the school pupils make good progress. This is because the RE leader, supported by her team, takes effective steps to improve RE outcomes. Standards are consistent due to the good level of support provided for staff. RE reinforces the importance of the school's vision. As a result, pupils are flourishing in RE.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	21 October 2021	URN	147891
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2015		
School status	Voluntary Aided	NOR	358
Name of MAT	Inspiring Futures Through Learning		
Diocese	Oxford		
Headteacher	Kate Holland		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	The school was placed in Special Measures (Ofsted 2019) and converted to academy status in February 2021.		
Inspector's name	Delia Sheppard	No.	942