Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England Primary Academy

Vision

"In the light of Christ, we will shine together."

"I am the light of the world." (John 8:12)

"Live as children of light." (Ephesians 5:8-9)

St Mary's Church of England Primary Academy 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

- This is a school where people truly 'shine together.' The deeply embedded Christian vision, supported by the values of love, hope, wisdom and joy, is lived out by the St Mary's community. This is driving leaders' decision-making, creating a culture of love and care in which pupils and adults are enabled to flourish.
- Driven by their vision, inspirational leaders have brought this school community together. They have created a real sense of belonging and developed a place of which pupils and adults are proud.
- Love is central to caring and nurturing relationships at St Mary's. The support provided to pupils, including those with additional needs, and their families offers a 'guiding light.' This is having a very positive impact in enabling those in the school community to 'shine brightly together.'
- Joyful and thought-provoking worship is a significant and central part of St Mary's. It brings the vision and values to life for pupils and adults. This enriches the spiritual being of the school.
- Leaders have developed an effective and engaging religious education (RE) curriculum. This equips pupils with the skills they need to explore the diversity of a range of religions and worldviews.

Development Points

- Broaden the school-wide understanding of spirituality, so that it can be planned for across the curriculum. This is to develop deeper opportunities for pupils' spiritual development.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to initiate responses to injustice. This is to strengthen their understanding of how their actions can make a positive difference to the lives of others.

Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

St Mary's is a school where pupils and adults truly 'shine together'. Driven by a belief that everyone can shine, the relatively new and inspirational leadership team have embedded their biblically rooted vision. Along with carefully chosen values, it has been the driving force in bringing the school community together. Leaders rightly identified this as the first step in ensuring improvement at this vibrant primary academy. Supported by effective and knowledgeable governors, they have made sure that the vision is pivotal to policies and practice. It has been the bedrock of difficult decisions on their improvement journey. Governors of this single academy trust know their school well and provide effective support. They have clear systems in place to evaluate the impact of the vision. This is particularly in relation to behaviour, wellbeing and the holistic development of pupils. The vision is lived out in school through a set of well-known values: love, joy, hope and wisdom. Consequently, it is meaningful to the pupils. They are proud of the way they demonstrate these and the ways in which they are enabled to 'shine together'.

Vision and Curriculum

With the aim of raising aspirations, leaders have developed a curriculum to inspire the young minds of their pupils. Reflecting their vision, they have created a vibrant learning environment that nurtures and celebrates the achievements of pupils at St Mary's. This is particularly evident in the creative use of the outdoor environment, designed to introduce purposeful play for all pupils. This has radically improved behaviour and relationships. In addition, this motivates these young people, including those with additional needs, to succeed. The curriculum is designed to evoke curiosity and a sense of awe and wonder. This is seen in the work carried out in producing the school 'Little Bird' book. This includes contributions from pupils across the school as they explored their values and the meaning of spirituality through art. Each family has a copy to support the school values being lived out at home. Leaders inspire pupils through a range of clubs and sporting activities. Carefully chosen trips, such as the whole school visit to a local theatre, open young minds to appreciate what is available to them. Although leaders have implemented several strategies to support the spiritual development of pupils, this is in its infancy. Spirituality is not widely enough understood to be meaningfully woven throughout the curriculum. As a result, there are missed opportunities for spiritual flourishing.

Worship and Spirituality

Worship is a joyous coming together of pupils and adults. It is a time to pause, reflect and consider the school vision and values. It is often linked to stories, including those from the Bible. Pupils are keen to share their thoughts and reflect on the messages they hear. For example, when reflecting on generous love, they talked about how important it is to support their friends during sports day. Pupil leaders support the spiritual development of their peers through the way they begin worship with liturgy that draws others in and sets the scene. They are proud to work towards bronze or silver awards. This demonstrates the value leaders place on the role of these young people. Those working towards silver plan and lead worship for pupils in the early years. This develops their confidence, supports them spiritually and inspires others. Pupils have a good knowledge of Bible stories and their meanings. They champion the story of the lost coin, explaining that 'it tells us how we are all important and that Jesus loves everyone.' Pupils are invited to pray or reflect, demonstrating the invitational nature. Along with delightful and poignant singing, this contributes meaningfully to the spiritual flourishing of pupils and adults alike.

Vision and School Culture

Guided by their vision, St Mary's is a nurturing and loving school community, built on caring and positive relationships. Leaders act with compassion, ensuring staff feel valued. Staff appreciate the support and training they are given for their roles and value the trust that is placed in them. Adults model the school values of love, joy, hope and wisdom, enabling pupils to build trusting and respectful relationships. Staff make pupils feel valued

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for every small step of success. In turn, pupils support each other and play and learn together harmoniously. Mental health and wellbeing are given a high priority. An ethos of inclusion, rooted in hope, permeates the school. This is because staff and leaders know their pupils and families well. They provide bespoke provision and a wide range of support and opportunities for learners. The pastoral guidance offered to pupils is exceptional. Along with a unique approach of nurture through art, these strategies enable pupils, including those with additional needs, to succeed.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Pupil leadership is a significant part of life at St Mary's. They are proud of the difference they are making to their school community in enabling them to 'shine together.' Leaders have developed meaningful roles in a drive to raise aspirations. This is to enable pupils to begin to understand that they can make a difference and take responsibility. Young play leaders support their peers at break times, ensuring they have friends to play with. The play leaders in Key Stage 1 take real pride in the way they keep their school environment free from litter. This is 'so that it is a nicer place to be for everyone.' School council value their regular meetings with the principal to explore ways to help in their community. They help to organise various fundraising events to raise money for school and to support national charities such as Children in Need. Pupils' understanding of responsibility and justice comes through worship and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. They can talk about the importance of saving the planet and the need to help people less fortunate than themselves. However, they do not have the skills or confidence to challenge injustice. Consequently, they do not realise that they can have an independent voice in enabling change.

Religious Education

Supported by the diocese, leaders have created an engaging and diverse curriculum. It enables pupils to develop a secure understanding of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. Pupils talk confidently about the wide range of worldviews they study, including Christianity, and recognise their global significance. They have a growing appreciation of the similarities and differences and how beliefs can impact on the lives of believers. Pupils are encouraged to question and to consider how they fit into the diverse world in which they live. Lessons include deeper thinking questions to challenge pupils. Staff are supported in both their subject knowledge and the implementation of the curriculum by the diocese and the RE lead. This is developing their skills as teachers.

Knowledge organisers at the beginning of each unit of work support pupils' learning. They look back on these in lessons to check their understanding. They enjoy the range of different ways they record their work, which is of a high standard. Opportunities are given for reflection in lessons; this deepens their understanding. Carefully planned assessment tasks ensure teachers are clear about next steps for learning. This contributes to the strong progress pupils are making. Their progress is reviewed regularly by leaders, including governors, ensuring RE maintains its status in a Church school.

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National Society for Education
Church of England & Church in Wales

Methodist Schools

Information

Address	Trinity Avenue, Mildenhall, Suffolk IP28 7LR		
Date	23 June 2026	URN	137419
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	407
Diocese	St Edmunsbury and Ipswich		
MAT	St Mary's Church of England Single Academy Trust		
MAT Chair	Julian Campbell		
Headteacher	Roxanne Rutter		
Chair of Governors	Julian Campbell		
Inspector	Sue Thackray		