

# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

## St Mark's Church of England Voluntary Controlled All-Through School

### Vision

St Mark's Church of England school is to be a place where students acquire the knowledge and skills to become confident, resilient, lifelong learners who can contribute to the world they live in. Through our core Christian values of love, service and belonging, students will be supported by the whole community to achieve excellence.

### Strengths

- The Christian vision drives leaders' actions. They have formed strong partnerships which are beneficial for the school. Leaders live out the core Christian values and, as a result, staff and pupils feel valued and are enabled to flourish.
- There is a strong sense of community and belonging across the school. Pupils and adults from a variety of backgrounds are made to feel welcome. Pupils treat each other well, are willing to serve others and recognise the kindness of their teachers and other staff.
- Religious education (RE) has a prominent place in school life. It is valued by senior leaders, who provide effective continual professional development and resourcing for subject leaders. As a result, pupils value learning about different people's beliefs in order to better understand others.
- Staff at all levels are committed to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those going through difficult times are enabled to flourish. They know pupils on an individual level and demonstrate love through their actions.
- Pupils have a desire to play an active role in school life. They take opportunities to serve others and demonstrate confident leadership in a variety of roles.

### Development Points

- Develop a common language to be used to promote spiritual flourishing. This is to enable pupils to explore and express their own spirituality more clearly.
- Ensure that collective worship is relevant and engaging for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. This is so that older pupils flourish spiritually, both within and through worship.
- Broaden pupils' understanding of injustice in order that they are able to speak on behalf of others. This will enable pupils to use their voice to act upon local and global issues that they are passionate about.



## Inspection Findings

The values of love, service and belonging permeate school life at St Mark's Church of England school. The school's vision has been shaped by the local context and has a distinctly Christian basis. This includes St Paul's description of the church as one body with many different parts, which serve each other. Leaders across the school have embedded the core values, creating an environment where pupils flourish. The leadership team are viewed as approachable and ensure staff views are listened to, including through a wellbeing committee. Continual professional development is tailored to individuals, for instance through the coaching programme. This means that adults are also enabled to thrive in their roles. Leaders have been proactive in forming strong partnerships, such as those with the Diocese of Winchester and St Mark's church. The diocesan deputy director of education served as a school governor, enabling a smooth transition to an all-through school while developing the school's values. Governors' actions are driven by a desire to serve the school well. They play a proactive role in monitoring and furthering the impact of the school's Christian vision. This includes reviewing RE, which contributes to developments in the curriculum.

The Christian vision has shaped the curriculum across the school, enabling pupils to feel included and achieve excellence. Leaders' decisions, such as choosing to teach in mixed ability groups, have been driven by the vision. Pupils with SEND are supported to flourish through staff's knowledge of individual pupils. This is enhanced by additional support. This includes speech and language interventions and a staff member dedicated to working with pupils needing additional literacy support. The curriculum is intentionally diverse and inclusive, for example through the selection of texts that pupils read. Year 5 pupils carried out enthusiastic research about female astronauts, contributing to the breakdown of stereotypes and raising of aspirations. Teachers provide opportunities for discussion and reflection across various lessons and in personal development topics, such as 'Being Me'. This contributes to the spiritual flourishing of pupils. Visits are carefully planned in order to expand pupils' horizons and provide opportunities for spiritual growth. Trips such as Year 3 going to Stonehenge provide pupils with 'wow moments'. Some pupils are able to articulate their own spiritual development, for example identifying 'mirror moments', where they have reflected on their own actions or values. However, there is not a cohesive and common understanding of spirituality across the school. Consequently, some pupils are unable to clearly articulate what helps their spiritual development.

Collective worship has a prominent place in school life and contributes to the school community flourishing. There are opportunities for individual reflection and prayer, which enable spiritual development for pupils and staff in this context. Collective worship is carefully planned to be inclusive and invitational, recognising the diverse nature of the school community. Primary pupils are particularly keen to play an active role, for example through leading prayers. Some older secondary pupils are less engaged, being less willing to contribute. The partnership with St Mark's church has enhanced collective worship, particularly through the work of the school chaplain. She provides resources and has worked with staff to review and improve the delivery of class worship. Staff value being involved in collective worship and provide a model to pupils through sharing their own reflections. There is often a challenge to put a value into action, which has resulted in pupils carrying out acts of service towards others.

The value of serving others is embedded in the school community. Leaders' actions have been driven by the school vision, for example rewriting the code of conduct. This means that expectations around behaviour are shaped by showing love and service and enabling others to belong. Staff intentionally use this language when praising or addressing behaviours. As a result, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and consider their impact on others. Pupils are keen to stand up against injustice and are supported by staff to do so. For example, following an assembly by a local charity, pupils raised money for their work through cake, book and toy sales. Pupils also met with the executive headteacher to campaign for healthy soups to be served in the canteen. Clubs such as eco warriors and gamechangers have enabled pupils to serve others in their immediate community. They do so with confidence and good will. However, pupils' awareness of injustice more broadly is not as developed. Consequently, they do not take a lead in speaking out for justice on a wider scale.



RE is highly valued by leaders, which means it is well resourced and embedded in the curriculum. Leaders of RE are supported in their role through training from the diocese and participating in local networks. This has helped them in creating a curriculum that is accurate, challenging and well-sequenced. There is clear identification of core knowledge and a strong focus on literacy throughout the curriculum. Through monitoring, leaders have a clear picture of the needs of staff and are able to implement effective professional development. This means that pupils enjoy RE lessons and speak positively about the subject. Leaders are clear that the intent of the curriculum is to enable pupils to grow in knowledge and, therefore, be more respectful and inclusive. As a result, pupils recognise that RE plays a highly significant role in contributing to a respectful and harmonious environment.

The school's vision, implemented by leaders at all levels, has cultivated an environment where staff and pupils from a variety of backgrounds live well together. Leaders have thought carefully about ensuring that all pupils feel they belong. For example, when new pupils join in Reception and Year 7 there is a variety of visits and events for families. Through these, staff demonstrate the school's values and begin to form supportive relationships. As a result, pupils speak about a strong sense of community and belonging. They respect their teachers as kind, supportive and helpful. Staff feel confident that they can approach leaders and seek support when needed. There is a strong sense of mutual care which positively impacts mental health and wellbeing. For pupils, regular moments of reflection and mindfulness are built in to the week. The value of love is defined as including caring for yourself. As one pupil said, this means 'you take time to appreciate yourself so you can appreciate others.' Pupils, therefore, feel known and valued, are accepting of difference and able to flourish.

## Information

Address	St Mark's Church of England School, Stafford Road, Shirley, Southampton, SO15 5TE		
Date	21 October 2024	URN	116342
Type of school	Maintained Voluntary Controlled All-Through	No. of pupils	968
Diocese	Diocese of Winchester		
Headteacher	Stephanie Bryant		
Chair of Governors	Hugh Evans and Gerry Gibbs		
Inspector	Joseph Greenhalgh		