

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Mortimer St Mary's Church of England Junior School

Vision

'Life in all its fullness', John 10:10

With Aspiration, Resilience and Respect. At Mortimer St Mary's Junior School we will live and celebrate "life in all its fullness" by taking every opportunity both in and out of school, to achieve our best and find ways to achieve our school motto "Share Your Light".

Mortimer St Mary's Junior 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.

Strengths

- The school's deeply embedded Christian vision drives strategic decisions and everyday interactions. Its active call to pupils and adults to 'share your light' makes the vision a living reality.
- The curriculum is enriched through skilful planning to nurture pupils' cultural, ethical and spiritual development. Extra-curricular provision, visits and international links expand pupils' aspirations and horizons beyond their village community.
- Collective worship is highly valued, varied and inclusive in style, enabling pupils and adults to grow spiritually. It invites all to take part without compulsion and is inspiring.
- In line with Christian vision, pupils and adults are treated well, with each person valued as a unique individual. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included successfully through carefully tailored provision and support.
- The Religious Education (RE) curriculum is well balanced, ensuring that pupils gain comprehensive knowledge of world religions and worldviews. They have a strong understanding of Christianity as a global religion. Expert leadership support and excellent resources enable teachers to provide high quality lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy RE and make good progress.

Development Points

- Further extend pupils' opportunities for independent social action within and beyond the school community. This is to enhance the active culture of responsibility and care for others.



Inspection Findings

Mortimer St Mary's Junior School is joyful and welcoming. Carefully crafted by leaders, staff and pupils, its Christian vision cements the federation with St John's Infant School. The active call to pupils and adults to 'share your light' infuses its ethos, driving positive interactions. The three values of aspiration, resilience and respect further express the vision. These are described as cornerstones, encouraging pupils to achieve their best, alongside being giving and understanding members of the community. The visibility of the vision and values, alongside biblical references on displays, demonstrably reflect the school's Church foundation. Governors' frequent monitoring visits include learning walks and discussions with staff and pupils, as well as considering survey data. 'Always flourishing' is a standing item on their governing body agenda. While this facilitates regular evaluation of the school's effectiveness as a Church school, it sometimes lacks detail. Nonetheless, governors know the school very well.

The rich curriculum is an expression of 'life in all its fullness'. It nurtures pupils' academic, cultural and ethical development, and fosters their spiritual growth. For instance, they experience the wonder of nature through the forest school. The focus on God's creation is further explored with the twinned school in India. Sharing their work about the impact of pollution with this international perspective, affects pupils' views significantly. Art and music projects connect with pupils' learning about world religions and themes in collective worship. Bold topic choices are made, such as a cross-curricular project on the heart, which includes observing a dissection. Pupils eloquently debate the ethics of breeding animals for human transplants. Fundraising for a heart related charity then reflects the school's Christian vision to 'share your light'. Pupils' talents and achievements in and out of school are celebrated as they are encouraged to aim for excellence. Benefitting from a school swimming pool enables older pupils to enjoy the sea and engage in team building on their residential. The curriculum, including extra-curricular provision, visits and international links, thus expands pupils' horizons beyond their village community.

The spiritual and worship life of the school is rich and varied. It is inclusive, inviting participants to pray or reflect according to their personal perspectives. Whole school worship is planned in themes across the year and is biblically based. Class-based worship offers pupils more personal engagement, exploring weekly themes with their classmates. Clergy strengthen familiarity with Anglican traditions through weekly worship. The strong relationship with St Mary's Church enriches worship through services across the year. Pupils are highly involved in preparing and leading these, and families welcome being invited. Opportunities for prayer throughout the day help promote spiritual growth. Prayer buddies (cartoon-style characters) are displayed, offering visual support for prayer. They provide structure and connect concepts of saying please, being thankful and being forgiving. The federation prayer, written by worship leaders, features in reflection spaces in classrooms. Pupils independently prepare personal prayers or craft items for these, demonstrating that they are personally meaningful. Pupils and adults alike value 'Space Makers' time weekly. This resource from the diocese is founded on ancient pathways and practices of meditation and prayer. An outdoor reflection area provides a peaceful haven for individuals, groups and whole classes to gather in prayer, reflect or simply be still. Pupils listen to the sounds and inhale the scents of nature, appreciating its beauty in quiet contemplation. Leaders evaluate the impact of collective worship and monitor pupil and adult feedback regularly. This enables them to adapt and enrich worship over time, ensuring that pupils and adults flourish spiritually.

Pupils and adults are treated with care and compassion, because of the centrality of the Christian vision. Staff wellbeing is a high priority. Adults benefit from high quality training and consideration for their career development. Staff are consequently highly committed and work as a stable, supportive team. They refer regularly



to 'share your light', regarding this as a key expectation in terms of their work. Valuing each person as a unique individual ensures that provision for vulnerable pupils, and those with SEND, is personalised. Such pupils are supported effectively in class, so are included in lessons alongside their friends. Where they may benefit from specialist interventions or working individually, provision is tailored to match needs. They thrive and make good progress as a result. Diversity is celebrated through carefully selected resources and books. These represent a range of ethnicities and cultures. This builds pupils' appreciation of and respect for others' identities and traditions, while considering their own. Using Church of England resources such as 'Valuing all God's Children' further reinforces a message of love, care and inclusivity. Leaders' detailed consideration of how to expand pupils' thinking and ideas beyond their everyday life experience has a great impact. Pupils have strong views that people should be treated well, which is positively reflected in their behaviour in lessons and at play.

Flowing from the vision, the school's core values of respect, resilience and aspiration underpin relationships. They provide a clear framework for balancing individual enjoyment and achievement with respect and consideration for others. The value of aspiration drives opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in leadership roles such as learning champions, house captains, and helping heroes. The school's strong focus on the environment encourages pupils to regard themselves as eco-warriors. Daily contributions to the school's composter, also litter picking and tree planting in the community, reinforce this. Partnership with a Church school in India is constructed carefully, so that the relationship is reciprocal and mutually respectful. Pupils benefit greatly from considering the perspectives of different lives with similar goals. Pupils recognise that they can support change by fundraising for organisations such as the local food bank, charities and St Mary's Lent Mission. Such activities galvanise a sense of purpose in social action. While they are principally organised by adults, pupils take on active roles and are enabled to show leadership. A pupil organised additional foodbank donations during Advent, for example. Leaders recognise that there is scope for further encouragement of independent social action initiatives like this.

The RE curriculum is known as 'religion and worldviews' (RWV). It ensures that pupils gain comprehensive knowledge of major world faiths, worldviews and Christianity as a global religion. Working closely with the diocese, the subject leader has redesigned RWV highly effectively, so that it is carefully sequenced and well-balanced. Teachers are provided with detailed planning and excellent resources. Due to expert leadership support, they design interesting lessons, which pupils enjoy. As a result, pupils are confident in their knowledge and understanding. In Year 5 for example, pupils consider concepts of sacrifice, discussing whether Jesus' death can be considered a good thing. Pupils record and express their learning through writing, storyboards and art. They make strong progress because they receive effective feedback and are proud of their work. Some pupils record their work digitally, which is then available on a platform shared with parents. Class 'floor books' are treasured as they show work over several years of pupils' learning. Images and notes remind pupils of their prior learning, and demonstrate how well they learn over time. Pupils value RWV because they recognise that appreciation of world religions and worldviews is important to society.

Information

Address	The Street, Mortimer Common, Stratfield Mortimer, Reading RG7 3PB		
Date	13 March 2025	URN	109977
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	242
Diocese/District	Oxford		
Executive Headteacher	Clare Beswick		
Chair of Governors	Craig Hassey		
Inspector	Rachel A Jones		