

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

### St Mary's Church of England School, Aylesbury

#### Vision

Our school's vision is rooted in Matthew 5:14-16, where Jesus calls his followers to be "the light of the world." We believe we are called to illuminate our communities and reflect God's love through visible faith and action. Like a city on a hill that cannot be hidden, our educational community emphasises living in a way that inspires others. Through developing character, encouraging good works, and fostering open faith expression, we strive to be beacons of God's love. Our pupils and adults shine brightly in their words and actions, serving as role models who positively impact the world around them.

St Mary's Church of England 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 vision and values, which are biblically rooted in clear and purposeful ways, inspire school life at St Mary's. They empower pupils and adults to 'shine as lights' with and for one another.
- Religious education (RE) contributes impressively to pupils' understanding of themselves and others. Through RE, they become deep, reflective and compassionate thinkers who are well-informed about a range of religious and non-religious worldviews.
- A shared understanding of spirituality has led to a range of planned and spontaneous opportunities for pupils to reflect deeply across the curriculum.
- Pupils actively contribute to the life of the school through a range of leadership responsibilities. They relish the opportunity to serve others, act for change and treasure the earth.
- Collective worship contributes powerfully to the spiritual flourishing of pupils and adults. It unites the school community in reflection and celebration in their shared aspiration to be 'beacons of love'.

#### Development Points

- Develop and refine assessment practices in RE. This is to help pupils know what it means to be good at the subject and improve further.



## Inspection Findings

### Vision and Leadership

The vision, rooted in Jesus' encouragement to shine as lights in the world, galvanizes life at St Mary's. Pupils and adults are driven by a deep desire to serve one another in word and deed. The biblical basis of the vision inspires the school community to celebrate and support each other's individuality and aspirations. They make the vision a lived reality through supporting each other to be the best version of themselves. The Christian values of respect, resilience and integrity pervade school life. They shape pupils' approach to learning, play and their extra-curricular experiences outside school. As a result, they grow in character as confident and compassionate individuals with a desire to see people and the planet thrive. Leaders use the vision to drive decision-making and school improvement. Governors ably evaluate the effectiveness of the school, ensuring the school lives up to its foundation as a Church school. Partnerships with the diocese, trust and church enrich the daily experience of pupils and adults.

### Worship and Spirituality

Leaders use the vision to craft vibrant acts of collective worship which are cherished by pupils and adults alike. They provide purposeful opportunities to reflect deeply upon the school's vision and values, strengthening a mutual commitment to one another. Worship contributes meaningfully to the development of pupils' and adults' spirituality. They readily express how this shared, reflective time inspires them to flourish in their work and relationships. Individuals are recognised for living out the vision in weekly celebration worship. Singing is a particularly valued and impactful element of worship at St Mary's. It fosters a sense of community where pupils and adults feel that they belong and play a significant part. A number of strategies support spiritual reflection within collective worship, including story, stillness and discussion. Pupil worship leaders support engagement in worship in practical ways, including sitting with younger peers to support their understanding of the values. Partnerships with the local church enrich the spirituality of the school community. For instance, choir club provides impactful opportunities for pupils to experience and express their spirituality.

### Vision and curriculum

The school's vision is the foundation for its curriculum. Leaders plan engaging lessons which enable pupils to 'shine' in different subjects as writers, historians and musicians. Learning challenges pupils to achieve highly whilst nurturing their personal development and resilience. A shared understanding of spirituality, rooted in an awareness of relationships and our connection to people and planet, punctuates the curriculum. Leaders have used this understanding to identify and enable opportunities for pupils to reflect deeply in lessons. For instance, 'big questions' help pupils consider how they can use, apply and express their thinking. Pupils learn well because staff are deeply committed to ensuring that pupils, including the vulnerable, thrive in their learning. Clear communication and consultation with parents and carers leads to productive dialogue which supports pupils' curriculum engagement. For example, some parents run activities such as a Diwali workshop. Teachers employ a range of strategies to provide pupils with the support they need to engage well within lessons. Pupils benefit from a range of trips and clubs which broaden their horizons.

### Vision and School Culture

Flowing from the vision, leaders create a safe, nurturing and inclusive learning environment. Love sits at the centre of a school community in which pupils and adults are personally known, empowered and celebrated. Pupils develop their interests, independence and confidence to use their words and actions to express themselves. This inclusivity enables pupils to be proud of who they are. This contributes significantly to their wellbeing. Pupils describe St Mary's as a 'kind' school. On the rare occasions when conflicts arise, pupils value



restorative conversations to mend relationships and move forward positively. Adults feel cared for and supported because their wellbeing is important to school leaders. They value the support, autonomy and opportunities to develop professionally and personally within a culture of empowerment. For instance, a number are pursuing interests in coaching approaches, to support colleagues to further grow in their roles. The culture of treating others well reaches into the wider community. Leaders welcome and talk to families daily at the school gate. St Mary's work in supporting pupils who are young carers is highly commendable. Opportunities for these pupils to discuss experiences and engage in enrichment activities ensure these pupils feel seen and supported.

#### Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Leaders use the vision to shape and exemplify a culture of service and responsibility. Pupils are inspired to support others across school life, and many choose to do so through formal leadership opportunities. For example, they act as peer mentors, house captains, play leaders and eco warriors. Such responsibilities help pupils to grow in confidence to enact change. Pupils are proud of the opportunities to express and model how to be light bearers for people and planet. The exploration of issues of fairness and justice weave throughout the curriculum. This includes considering issues of local plastic pollution and tourism in Antarctica. Their learning frequently animates pupils to bring about positive change. They raise awareness of issues that are important to them through collective worship, such as treasuring the earth and animals. Pupils communicate persuasively to local decision-makers to bring about change. This focuses on a range of issues, including the environment and representation at local football clubs.

#### Religious Education

RE at St Mary's is strong and ably led. Purposeful planning and well-trained teachers ensure pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills over time. Pupils delight in their RE learning and the ways it enables them to understand and respect others. They recognise how thinking like a theologian, philosopher or human/social scientist helps them learn about beliefs and practices. A variety of approaches within lessons means that classes develop a secure understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews. This includes a growing awareness of Christianity as a lived, diverse, global faith. Pupils know how well they are achieving in lessons. However, they are less sure as to exactly what skills are needed to improve. Within lessons, pupils reflect on their own worldview and consider what has influenced their perspectives. For instance, Year 6 pupils consider the extent to which they resonate with the Christian belief that humans are creation caretakers. Partnerships with the diocese, local church and trust enrich pupils' experience of the subject.

## Information

Address	Keen Close, Fairford Leys, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP19 7WF		
Date	6 February 2026	URN	147876
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	449
Diocese	Oxford		
MAT	Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust		
MAT Chair	Michael Mill		
Headteacher	Lisa Bennett		
Chair of Governors	Sue Newling		
Inspector	Ryan Parker		