

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

Shinfield St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School					
<b>Address</b>	Chestnut Crescent, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire RG2 9 EJ				
<b>Date of inspection</b>	1 October 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Voluntary Aided Primary		
<b>Diocese</b>	Oxford	<b>URN</b>	109976		
<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?</b>			<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Additional Judgements</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>			<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
	<b>The impact of religious education</b>			<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

## School context

Shinfield St Mary's is a primary school with 357 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Since the last inspection, the school has expanded significantly. This has involved extensive building work to accommodate more than double the number of pupils previously on roll.

## The school's Christian vision

We aim to enable our children to lead rich and productive lives of their own choosing while making positive contributions to the world, by exemplifying for them the values we hold dear, which include Christian values that nurture people as individuals, celebrating their differences.

*"As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John, 13:34*

## Key findings

- The dedicated, inspirational headteacher works tirelessly for the good of all pupils and adults in her care. Her passionate leadership has enabled the school to maintain its vision and values despite its rapid expansion.
- The school's unequivocal inclusive nature ensures that every individual is loved and valued within this Christian, family environment. This has particularly transformed the lives of vulnerable pupils and their families.
- The strong support provided by the local churches embodies the different expressions of Christianity in the community. Their input into collective worship and the church club enriches the spiritual journeys of everyone at the school.
- Led by an outstanding teacher, provision for Religious Education (RE) is exemplary. Standards of teaching and learning in the subject are exceptionally high, enabling all pupils to flourish well.
- Pupils live out their vision and core Christian values. This is shown in the way they are active in caring for their local environment. Although the school is making a real difference in their local community, it is at an early stage of exploring global connections.

## Areas for development

- Enrich pupils' awareness of how they can be global agents for change and make a meaningful difference in the world today, beyond their local context.
- Extend opportunities to evaluate collective worship more effectively in ways that lead to improving practice.
- Ensure school documents and policies include the Christian vision so that it is made clear and explicit to a wider audience.

## **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**

The school's vision is firmly rooted in the biblical teaching of John 13 and reflects the context of the school exceptionally well. Leaders monitor its impact, ensuring that the school's original foundation is maintained, despite many changes recently. Associated values, such as determination, nurture, inclusion respect and enjoyment are seen in action at every turn. The school ethos is very much one which follows Jesus' teaching to, 'love one another as I have loved you'. This means that good relationships abound, underpinned by respect and love. Governors are considerate of each other in their decision making, always coming back to the school's vision. Staff love and care for their pupils, going the extra mile to help families who are experiencing difficulties. The school welcomes all pupils, regardless of faith or background. This highlights the school's inclusive, nurturing vision and shapes all development plans. Parents particularly appreciate the school's inclusive nature and say, 'everyone is welcome here'. The mission statement and values are explicit in school policies, but the new vision is not shown on all documents.

The curriculum is broad and rich, enabling all pupils to flourish both academically and spiritually. Progress for all pupils, including those who are vulnerable, is good. Attainment is in line with, and sometimes above, national statistics. The curriculum enhancement leader and interventions manager ensure that all pupils receive the support they need to reach their potential. They nurture pupils as individuals, discovering their unique gifts, which may not necessarily be academic. For instance, the school's sporting success has led to numerous awards, including Reading Sports Personality Awards' Primary School of the Year. All pupils are taught to cycle by the time they leave and bicycles are provided if needed. Extra-curricular activities, such as the popular church club, bring enjoyment and enhance the spiritual development of pupils. Residential trips to places like Rhos y Gwaliau outdoor education centre in Wales, also enable pupils to grow spiritually. A Year 6 pupil said, 'It was the best time of my life. I didn't know I could be so brave'. Taking part in regular outdoor learning allows all pupils to develop character and supports good mental health.

Growing in love for one another and inspired by Jesus' teaching, pupils are becoming conduits of change and making a difference in society. Pupils at Shinfield St. Mary's have a strong sense of service to others, illustrated by the way they responded to the plight of the homeless. This led to a highly innovative project, led by an enthusiastic Eco Leader. A remarkable bio-dome and allotment teaches pupils about sustainability and how to care for the world. Proceeds from selling the produce go to Launchpad, a local charity supporting the homeless. This is helping to make a difference to the lives of others in society. Pupils visit Shinfield View Care Home to sing to residents, making another positive contribution to the local community. The school rightly recognises the need to engage more with connections overseas in order to look beyond itself and enhance global thinking.

Counselling and support where needed, is offered as an outworking of the school's vision. For instance, parents are provided with strategies to help manage their children's anxiety or behaviour. Friendship contracts and the use of Playground Pals accentuate how pupils should love and care for one another. Pupils aspire to be Year Group Ambassadors and say 'I can't wait to get my badge. It means we model the values all the time'. The school uses SCARF Learning, an effective, growth-mindset approach that emphasises caring, achievement, resilience and friendship. This mirrors the school's vision, allowing pupils to adopt positive attitudes that unlock their potential as individuals. As a consequence, pupils are indeed beginning to lead rich and productive lives.

The local demographics are evolving swiftly and the school's intake is becoming more diverse, with over fifty pupils speaking English as an additional language. Recognising this, the school plans events such as Global Learning Day, British Values Week and visits by people from different faiths. As a result, difference and diversity is respected and celebrated. All are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of background or ability. As one parent commented, 'We are a big family, not just a school'. This is because the whole school team is united in ensuring pastoral care, mental health and wellbeing are priorities for all.

Acts of worship make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development and their understanding of the Christian vision. Links with local churches are strong and mutually beneficial. Weekly visits by the rector of St. Mary's church to lead worship, mean that pupils gain a good understanding of Anglican traditions. The Baptist church community visit the school fortnightly to present an 'Open the Book' assembly. In this way, pupils benefit

from a varied style of leadership of worship, saying, 'It's always fun and different every day'. Adults also like the way worship is structured so that they, too, benefit from mindfulness assemblies and the weekly values assembly. Pupils say they like the times of quiet and opportunities to pray, stating, 'We have time to think about things'. Worship is especially inclusive and invitational. Everyone, whether they have any faith or none, is able to take part with integrity and obvious enjoyment. Some evaluation of collective worship takes place, but this is not as effective enough in driving improvement.

RE at Shinfield St. Mary's has a high profile and provides a safe place to critically reflect and meaningfully explore beliefs. The excellent and passionate RE Leader has implemented a highly effective RE syllabus that supports spiritual development and reflects the vision well. An RE specialist, she actively leads innovation locally by lecturing RE students at Reading University and sharing her expertise with colleagues. A rich programme of visits and visitors ensures pupils develop an extensive knowledge and understanding of major world religions. For example, pupils say they learned a great deal from a Jewish rabbi. Staff and pupils have particularly grown in the depth of their learning in Christianity, with the use of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource.



### **The effectiveness of RE is Excellent**

Inspired by the school's vision to nurture people as individuals, the quality of teaching and learning in RE is consistently excellent. Monitoring and assessment of RE is very effective. Assessment is accurate, with standards in RE in line with, and sometimes above, other curriculum subjects. Care is taken to ensure that all pupils are supported in RE and learn according to their abilities. Therefore, all pupils make good progress and flourish academically and spiritually in RE, including the most vulnerable. High expectations for all ensure the more able pupils also thrive and excel in their deep discussions and thoughtful written work.

Headteacher	Sue Runciman
Inspector's name and number	Jenny Earp 288