Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Swithun's Church of England VC Primary School

Vision

'Building foundations for the future', Matthew 7: 24-27
At St Swithun's, we ensure everyone can build strong foundations, in order to make progress and reach their full potential. We raise aspirations, nurture and guide our pupils to enable them to develop the skills, knowledge and relationships needed to prepare them to lead a successful life at school and in society.

St Swithun's 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 Christian vision of building foundations for the future is embedded in all aspects of school life and enables the school community to thrive.
- In collective worship, leaders make careful adaptations so pupils and adults have opportunities to flourish spiritually. The range of approaches provides inspiration for times of collective worship.
- The vision drives the school's approach in designing a curriculum that considers the needs of all pupils, including vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs
- The school's vision and values are central to creating a culture in which pupils and adults feel well treated, and where wellbeing and good mental health are fully supported.

Development Point

- Embed the opportunities for spiritual growth throughout the curriculum so that pupils develop a deeper sense of awareness and connection to the world around them.

Inspection Findings

St Swithun's is a very welcoming school with its Christian vision at the heart of all actions. Pupils and their families are provided with tools in order to build foundations for the future, Matthew 7: 24-27. The vision has been carefully chosen to reflect the diverse needs of the school's community, recognising that each pupil needs something different in order to flourish. The vision helps pupils to be independent and successful, and achievements are recognised and celebrated together. There is a strong sense of cohesion among the school community, where pupils and adults feel valued, listened to and well supported. The supportive partnership between the school and governors reflects how the vision drives decision making. Leaders appreciate the way in which the vision shapes the mindful use of outdoor provision. This makes a positive contribution to the mental wellbeing of both pupils and staff in the school.

The school's Christian vision has been the driver for the recent curriculum changes. It is well crafted and structured and ensures that foundations are in place for pupils to build upon. The deployment of adults and thoughtful use of the environment shapes the nurturing care for pupils to be successful. The Alternative Resource Provision is one such example. Leaders have created a specifically tailored learning environment within the body of the school. This inclusive ethos ensures that the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of each individual. Pupils are given the tools to build foundations and make progress from their starting points. Leaders have started to plan opportunities for spiritual growth within the curriculum. In science, for example, pupils examine the wonder of creation. However, these spiritual links are not yet fully embedded.

Collective worship is inclusive and offers opportunities for all pupils to participate, including those of different faiths and those of none. Varied approaches and resources enable pupils of all ages and those with specific needs to engage. Pupils are excited by the use of resources such as puppets, drama and music to reinforce the vision. Adults and pupils appreciate the quiet time for reflection as it offers opportunities for spiritual growth. Staff guide pupil worship leaders in selecting readings, hymns and prayers which reinforce the school's values. Pupils lead their collective worship with confidence and enthusiasm. The strong partnership with St Swithun's parish gives the pupils and adults rich opportunities for spiritual development. The Ash Wednesday service and visits to church reinforce key times of the Christian year. Clergy from the school's parish and other local Christian churches regularly visit school to lead collective worship, enhancing opportunities to flourish spiritually. Key events in the liturgical calendar, such as the 'Easter trail', are celebrated with the wider community, providing individual opportunities for spiritual growth.

At St Swithun's, pupils and adults are respected and treated well. This is because the Christian vision guides actions and ensures that the school provides an environment where pupils and adults feel heard and valued. Parents feel that all adults know their children well. Vulnerable families and those in need are well supported by the school. Adults work tirelessly to access a range of external agencies to support families in building foundations for the future. This work is highly regarded by adults and families within the community. Outdoor learning, such as Forest School, encourages good foundations for wellbeing and mental health. The work associated with the spiritual garden offers additional pastoral care and creates an area of reflection for pupils and adults. Pupils are able to identify how the vision has helped to build their confidence and make them who they are. The recent introduction of the 'wow, ow and now' spiritual programme equips both pupils and adults with mechanisms to support them at different times in life. This forms a foundation upon which to build. Through the vision and values, leaders have

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created a culture which invests in the whole person. Staff feel they have a good network of support. As a result, staff morale is high and many staff report that they 'love working at St Swithun's'.

The Christian vision and values inspire the pupils to act with kindness and understanding towards each other. Pupils seize opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as pupil leaders who represent the views of their peers. Older pupils clearly enjoy their role of church buddies, where they have responsibility for younger pupils. Pupils welcome opportunities to be active agents of change and show good understanding of how their actions impact on the lives of others. Pupils talk for example, about how their contributions at Harvest benefit others. The Christian vision supports the school to make important partnerships. Through the school's involvement with a local community project, pupils are able to make a positive impact on the lives of others. This gives them the opportunity to be agents of change. Direct links with the teachings of Jesus support pupils to develop an awareness of justice in daily life. They explore issues of inequality or injustice that others may face.

The curriculum for RE is well balanced and meets the requirement for RE in a Church of England school. Leaders have reviewed the learning sequence to ensure it aligns with the pupils' needs. For example, a unit focusing on 'resilience' is now taught in the summer term, preparing pupils for their next stage of school life. The 'big question' at the beginning of each new unit of learning gives pupils opportunities for challenge. Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths, such as Hinduism, and speak with enthusiasm about their RE learning. Opportunities for reflection and spiritual growth are carefully planned, with staff mindful of the right pace of teaching to support this. Links to the school's vision and values are made throughout the RE curriculum. A varied range of approaches enables pupils to flourish and build foundations for the future.

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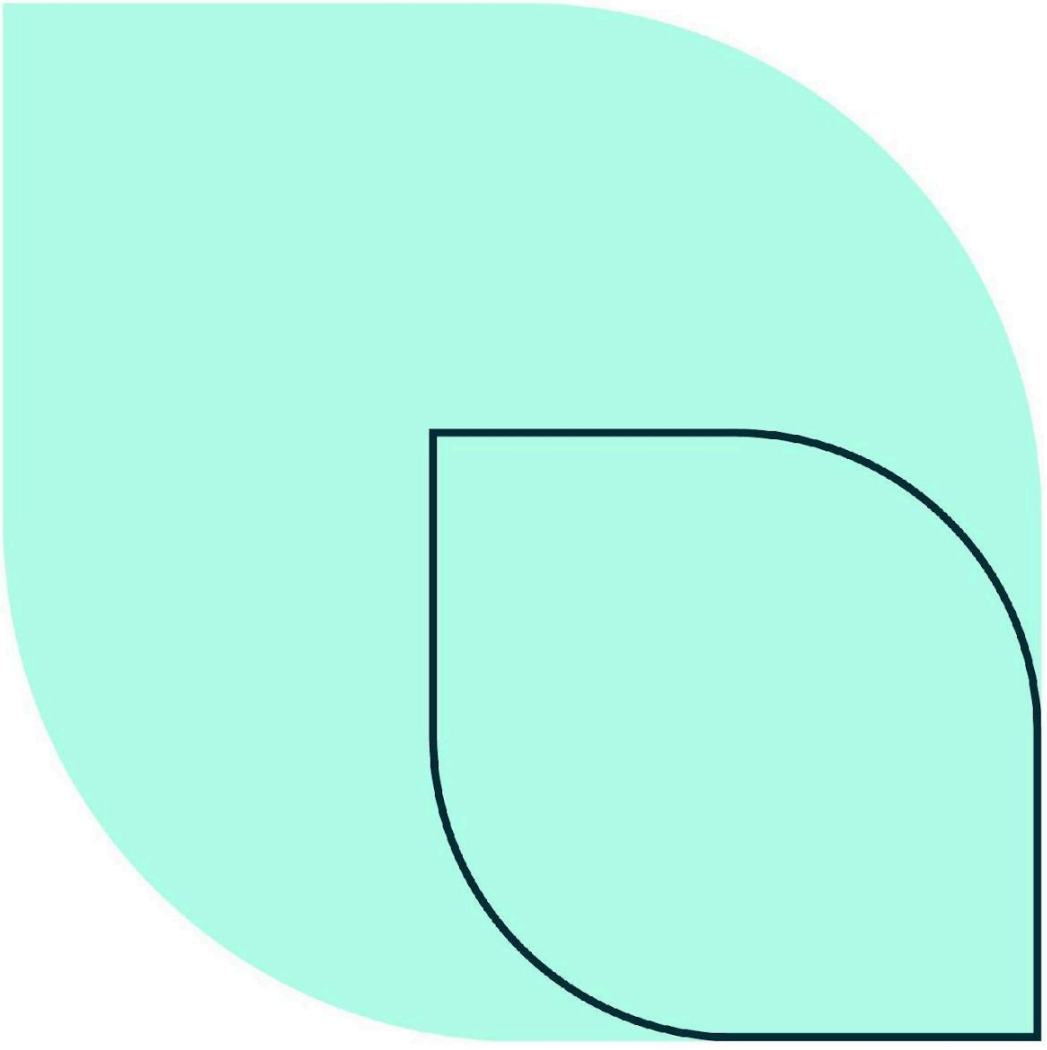
Information

Address	Ivel Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 1AX		
Date	6 February 2025	URN	109604
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	196
Diocese	St Albans		
Executive Head	Anita Whitehurst		
Head of School	Eddie Kirk		
Chair of Governors	Diane Osborne		
Inspector	Sarah Wickens