

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John's Meads Church of England Primary School

Vision

We are a 'light in the darkness', living life to the full, worshipping and working so that everyone may flourish and achieve their God-given potential.

St John's Meads Church of England Primary 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

- School and trust leaders have ensured that the Christian vision impacts positively upon the academic and wider curriculum. As a result, adults and pupils are empowered to live by their school values, fulfil their potential and flourish.
- School leaders have effectively utilised the support and training provided through trust-wide partnerships. Consequently, subject leadership has been enhanced and the curriculum is better tailored to meet the needs of pupils.
- As a result of the vision for all to flourish, there is a strong sense of nurture across the school. This culture of care and community is enabling adults and pupils, including the most vulnerable, to be effectively supported.
- Leaders have recently implemented an effective religious education (RE) curriculum. This is now carefully planned, resourced and taught so that pupils build a secure knowledge of a range of faiths and worldviews.

Development Points

- Enable children and adults to reflect on the impact of collective worship on their spiritual flourishing. This is to support the strategic development of this vital part of the school day.
- Embed the RE assessment system recently introduced at the school. This is so that leaders can evaluate and support the quality of teaching, and as a result, ensure pupils make good progress in this subject.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to explore issues of justice. This is to enable them to recognise their role in making a positive difference in the world.



Inspection Findings

Christian love and care exude across St John's Meads. The headteacher and trust leaders have worked decisively to drive forward school improvement, with the Christian vision reflected throughout the decisions made. The vision and values, developed by the school community, are owned and lived out throughout the school. Pupils strive to be a light for others and recognise how God can be a light in the darkness during difficult times. They understand how their school 'LIGHT' values of Love, Independence, Generosity, Honesty and Teamwork apply to their lives. Staff are equally clear about these values, highlighting the importance they place on these in how they live out their role in their work. Families appreciate the staff's dedication to meeting pupils' needs and value how their children are recognised as individuals.

Shaped by the vision for all to reach their God-given potential, leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. Strong partnerships between local schools within the trust have enhanced leadership capacity. As a result of this support, teachers have effectively used new schemes of work to improve lesson delivery and enhance pupils' learning. Staff hold high expectations for pupils and believe in their ability to achieve well. This is reflected in the provision for pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and learners who are vulnerable. Adults skilfully identify and plan for the needs of pupils, enabling them to access learning opportunities with the appropriate support in place. To enable children to live life to the full, a breadth of wider curriculum experiences are offered to the pupils at St John's Meads. Enrichment activities provide moments that enhance spiritual development. For example, Reception and Year 1 pupils cared for chicks as part of their science learning. This led to opportunities to reflect upon the concept of new life and to make links with the Easter story.

Collective worship is a valued time of the school day, which starts and ends with opportunities to pray and sing. There is a strong partnership with St John's Church. This enriches and broadens the collective worship experiences offered to pupils and adults. Pupils bring their class candle into their daily collective worship, setting the tone for this time together. Pupils can articulate how this reminds them to 'shine their lights' to help others. Prayer is an important part of school life at St John's Meads. Pupils are invited to write and share prayers from their class prayer books. Within worship, there are opportunities to reflect on Bible stories and Jesus's teaching. For example, pupils speak about how the parable of 'the lost son' teaches us how God will forgive people after they have made mistakes. Pupils have ideas about how worship could enhance spiritual growth, such as through taking an active role in planning and leading worship. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils and adults to share their thoughts and evaluation of worship with school leaders. As such, leaders are not able to accurately evaluate the impact of collective worship, to ensure it is supporting spiritual growth.

Leaders at school and trust level nurture and encourage adults and pupils to live life to the full. Staff members know that they are valued and are offered opportunities to flourish and grow. This support includes training, access to teaching resources and guidance with subject leadership roles. Staff are dedicated to ensuring that pupils are treated well. They know and care about them as individuals. Pupils talk with confidence about their 'five trusted adults' within school that they can speak to if they are worried or sad. As a result of the support systems in place, pupils recognise that they are treated well, respected and valued. Pupils look after each other well and show pride in caring for peers. Systems such as the Year 6 and Reception buddy pairs help to unite children across different year groups. Recent changes to the behaviour system, which now incorporates the school values, helps to highlight and strengthen these caring attitudes further. School staff have built strong partnerships with parents, who feel



comfortable approaching the school for support and advice. Pastoral leaders competently identify helpful support for pupils and families, including workshops to support with additional needs and mental health. Consequently, pupil attendance is rising, and families benefit from effective guidance and nurture from the school team.

The school's values of love, generosity, and teamwork are used to exemplify acts of care and love towards others. This nurtures a culture of forgiveness and compassion. Leadership roles, such as the school council and the newly formed 'Green Team', help pupils to develop a sense of responsibility towards others. Partnerships with local organisations have enhanced pupils' awareness of the world around them. For example, pupils learn about how a local church initiative has supported community development in Peru. Occasions exist for pupils to respond to causes they learn about within school, for example, through cake sales for charity. However, pupils are not routinely given opportunities to explore and act upon issues that they may view as unjust. As a result, pupils have a limited understanding of how they can be advocates for change to address issues of injustice.

The Christian vision to allow all to achieve their potential drives improvements in RE. A recently revised curriculum is given high status within the school. Much work has been carried out by leaders to develop RE, which has led to a curriculum that is well sequenced and accurate. Units are planned carefully to ensure pupils revisit chosen world faiths over their journey through school, enabling them to build upon and deepen prior knowledge. Staff are well-supported by leaders, with resources, tailored training and shared expertise provided within the trust. As a result, staff feel more confident teaching a range of religions and worldviews.

A high-quality RE curriculum supports pupils in their RE learning. There has been a whole school focus on remembering what has been learnt previously. This has aided pupils in articulating their knowledge of a range of faiths and making meaningful links in their learning. Teachers plan engaging lessons that provide quality learning experiences, helping pupils to remember more. For example, as a result of memorable art and drama activities, Reception pupils recall key elements of the Christian creation story. These experiences deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and a range of other world religions and worldviews. Teachers assess pupils' understanding through effective questioning in RE lessons. This helps staff to identify misconceptions and address them swiftly. 'Big questions' are used to assess progress from the start to end of units. However, this system is new. This means that leaders have not been able to use information on pupils' progress to make strategic developments to the curriculum. Pupils are beginning to think more deeply about what they have learnt and respond thoughtfully to reflective questions posed by teachers. The curriculum provides exploration of key concepts and the space for pupils to ask important questions. As a result, pupils engage enthusiastically with RE and speak confidently about the importance of learning about different faiths.

Information

Address	26 Rowsley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7XS		
Date	22 May 2025	URN	147712
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	183
Diocese	Chichester		
MAT	Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT)		
Interim Headteacher	Shevlyn Byroo		
Chair of Governors	Jenny Barnard Langston		
Chair of Trust	Mark Talbot		
Inspector	Rosie Piper		