Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) DRAFT

St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Islington	
Address	Fowler Road, Islington, London, N1 2EP

School vision

We believe that everyone is precious and loved by God. We aspire to let our light shine in all that we do. We nurture and empower one another to flourish. Together we shine in our world by showing compassion and by serving others. Let God's light shine through us.
'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'
Matthew 5:14-16

School strengths

- The deep foundation of the Christian vision has been a constant through past times of instability and change. It has upheld the Christian foundation of St Mary's as a Church of England school .
- The strong nurturing care shown to pupils and adults values them. The school gives them many opportunities to flourish.
- There is a close and mutually-beneficial partnership between the parish church and the school. This contributes to spiritual flourishing in collective worship and fully to the school living out the Christian vision.
- The well-planned curriculum, shaped intrinsically by the school's Christian vision, provides pupils with meaningful learning experiences matched to their needs. This gives them the opportunities to flourish in many ways.
- The depth and quality of learning in religious education (RE) makes significant positive impact upon developing the religious literacy of each pupil.

Areas for development

- Further develop opportunities, throughout the school, to actively explore issues of unfairness locally, nationally and globally. This is so that all pupils are enabled to challenge injustice and be agents of change.
- Develop the influence of the vision even further by structuring, clearly and robustly, the ongoing self-evaluation of the school's Christian character.

Inspection findings

St. Mary's Church of England Primary School is a small school, but with a Christian vision great in impact. Beginning with the biblical statement of the preciousness of each individual, the vision calls the school to work and live, mirroring God's light. Clearly understood, this powerfully influences all aspects of school life. The school has been through a period of instability and change in recent years, notably in senior leadership and staffing. However, the strength of rootedness of the vision has led to the school 'weathering the storms.' Despite the newness of the senior leaders and many other

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staff, the anchor of the vision brings confidence for continued improvement. The school expresses its outworking through four pillars arising from the vision: nurture; aspire; compassion; and empower. These give a clear framework for shaping school life, including school development priorities. The school fully relates the vision to its local community. It knows the community well, respecting its history and valuing the culture. The area has some of the highest deprivation in the country. St Mary's has unrelenting aspiration for all, endeavouring to support pupils and families to overcome barriers to learning and wellbeing. This gives a successful educational experience and opportunities to those who otherwise might not have these. The work of the school is so entwined in the vision that leaders, including governors, effortlessly consider its impact. They have a good appreciation of its effectiveness. The curriculum, known as the 'shine curriculum', is planned through the school's four pillars of the vision. This provides a curriculum within a Christian framework.

Regular use is made of the school's location and cultural capital available. These opportunities, including drawing upon skills of the community, bring enhancement to the curriculum. This engages pupils and prepares them as well-balanced citizens for today and the future. The curriculum is highly matched to the school community. The community sees itself represented in learning. For example, pupils speak enthusiastically about Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the first black Anglican bishop, who had also been a pupil at the school. They feel an affinity to his groundbreaking inspiration. From learning about his life, pupils link how he lived out his ministry to the school's vision now. A definition of spirituality held by the school leads to spiritual development opportunities intrinsically within the curriculum. For example, in learning about the Greeks, pupils considered what the Greeks have given to us?

There is a relentless quest for all to be successful and belief in the potential of every pupil. The school knows every pupil's story and takes an all-round approach to identifying vulnerabilities and difficulties. Appropriate support is put in place, as needed. A range of extra-curricular opportunities are provided, accessible for all. This helps those who have not, to have. The borough has the lowest amount of green space in the country. The school recognises a responsibility to give pupils the chance to experience outside green space. Many opportunities are provided for learning outside the classroom. This is being enhanced by the development of a secret garden and a ring of green space around the school. This forms a school project taken on by one of the school's houses. Such projects are framed in one of the pillars of the vision, encouraging active living out of it.

The school highly values collective worship and sees space for its vision to be unpacked. Through close partnership with the ministry team of the church, inclusive and invitational Biblical based worship is offered. The school's understanding of spirituality as: 'something we feel inside ourselves. . . being aware of something "bigger" outside of ourselves' shapes worship. Deep sending-out questions such as 'How can I listen?' are raised. These encourage reflection from worship to affect the day and life beyond school. This, along with the wider provision of worship, promotes spiritual flourishing, recognised by pupils and adults.

A culture of nurturing throughout the school shapes relationships. People feel safe and accepted. The Christian vision and a shared ethos of compassion values all. The built-up trust enables the school to address issues and support people overcome barriers to flourishing. This nurture, shown by serving others, supports the school community's wellbeing. This has helped the many newer members of staff settle in quickly.

The school has numerous mutually beneficial partnerships. These enrich the school's offer to pupils

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and help adults. Its active vision aligns with the priorities of the Islington Fairer Together Programme. The church closely supports the school, including giving pastoral care. The innovative seven by seven programme provides pupils with seven memorable experiences at the church. This gives deeper understanding of the Christian faith and church.

Close links with the diocese support the school in Christian character. The school is part of Islington Deanery network of schools. It regularly works with other local Church schools on activities such as RE moderation. This partnership enables St Mary's to benchmark itself. The school has hosted The World Reimagined. This art installation, a large, decorated globe, created a learning experience about transatlantic slave trade. The school has enhanced the learning by devising creative projects. These engage pupils in justice, diversity, community and hope. The school is sharing these throughout the diocese to accompany the globe, now exhibited in St Paul's Cathedral. However, opportunities for addressing issues of injustice by actively challenging external situations of unfairness are at an early stage and not available to all. Another positive partnership is with the neighbouring Little Angel Theatre. This world-renowned puppetry organisation has developed such ventures as using puppets to make a film about the school's vision. The school actively seeks out partnerships which help create an equitable culture. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take leadership roles such as the premises team. These develop virtues of character. Pupils happily give up playtimes to serve others.

St Mary's values RE and gives it high status. It is treated as a core subject, central to development of pupils' character. The relatively new RE subject leader leads the subject well. Staff are supported thoroughly, bringing greater consistency. There is an imaginative structure to RE which engages pupils well. Monitoring shows the quality of teaching is good. The school makes use of Islington's Library Service boxes of RE resources. These make learning real. The school follows the diocesan RE syllabus. Visual RE learning roadmaps in classrooms show a sequential curriculum covering Christianity and different principal world faiths. National expectations for RE in Church schools are met. Assessment of pupil progress indicates that pupils are learning well. They are developing strong religious literacy through a balanced curriculum approach and RE days. It also informs further developments for individual pupils and classes. Pupils enjoy RE and appreciate its effect on their lives now and for the future. The strong effectiveness of RE is truly contributing to the outcomes of the school's vision.

The inspection findings indicate that St Mary's Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	29 January 2024	URN	100446
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	161
Diocese	London		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Anthony David		
Chair	Eric Sorenson		
Inspector	Shaun Burns	No.	808

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