

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School

Vision

‘Laying firm foundations to believe and achieve.’

‘Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.’ Matthew 7:24-25

We believe that we are preparing our children for years beyond their schooling. At St Nicholas, we are forming a foundation on which they build their future education and lives. We are mindful that the experiences we offer help shape the adults that they will become. We aim to offer a broad, rich and balanced curriculum; one which shapes the whole child.

St Nicholas 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

- The vision and its supporting values are at the heart of this school. They form the language used across the school to support, encourage and challenge. This positively affects pupils’ learning, wellbeing and curiosity about their world.
- Collective worship unites the school community and reinforces key values and understanding of the school’s vision. It offers a meaningful time of reflection and supports the spiritual development of pupils and adults.
- Inspired by the vision, leaders ensure that wellbeing is a high priority throughout the school. Practical action from The Keys Academy Trust (the Trust) and governors enhances this. The result is a rich culture of nurture and care which permeates the school.
- The school has an outward-looking culture and pupils have a deep understanding of the importance of respect and kindness. Pupils are given regular opportunities to consider issues of justice and responsibility. As a result, they understand inequality and they can discuss, reflect and, where appropriate, take action.
- Effective leadership of religious education (RE) has established a challenging and relevant curriculum which enhances pupils’ learning. This means pupils are confident to talk about their own beliefs and worldviews, and those of other people, with deep understanding and respect.

Development Points

- Ensure planning for spiritual development is embedded across the curriculum. So that pupils and adults have increased opportunities to grow spiritually.



Inspection Findings

The school has a clear vision, with supporting values, that is faithful to its Anglican foundation. Members of the school community understand the vision very well. The language of the values is used very effectively to frame the behaviours that are expected. The vision and values are naturally referred to by both pupils and adults and impact daily life. The vision runs through the school like a golden thread and the values of respect, honesty, courage and kindness flow from it. There is a close alignment of the school's vision with that of the Keys Academy Trust. This supports the relationship with the trust in being mutually beneficial. Both the trust and the school act with generosity when they share expertise and support with each other. School leaders have deliberately created a culture where pupils and adults can thrive and achieve their best. There is an ethos of encouraging self-worth, helping others, making good choices, and building your life on solid foundations. It is worked out in a way that places pupils as individuals at the centre of the work of the school. The aim to support individuals to become confident and successful is achieved well.

The vision of the school is reflected well in its curriculum. Careful planning aims to ensure that opportunities to reflect on the school's values are included in learning. For example, when encountering the story of Daniel, pupils are asked to consider how he showed the school value of courage. Pupils can also recognise behaviours that reflect the school's values. As a result, the values enhance and shape pupils' attitudes in a very meaningful way. A rich extracurricular offer allows pupils to experience learning beyond the school. For example, a trip to Windsor Castle enhanced recent work in history. The school is very inclusive. This reflects its vision to build strong foundations and shape the adult that the child will become. Pupils are given many different opportunities to shine and achieve, which are not purely linked to academic success. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported extremely well. Parents of children with SEND appreciate the generosity of the school in seeking to work in close partnership with families. Staff ask parents 'What do you need from us?'. This develops a genuine partnership supporting the child. The result is that pupils with SEND are happy, settled and enjoy their learning. There is some planning to incorporate spiritual development within the curriculum. However, the mutual understanding of spirituality is insufficiently embedded into the learning. Therefore, opportunities for personal spiritual development are missed.

Collective worship is planned and organised to give the pupils and adults time to unite and reflect on the core values of the school. It gives the school a pause in the busyness of a school day, which creates a place for reflection. Pupils can articulate times when they have been helped to show courage and therefore personalise the theme of the worship. This enhances their spiritual development. Worship is based on the Anglican foundation of the school and is inclusive. Weekly worship focused on recent news stories shapes pupils' responses to national and international events. Their reflections show deep levels of understanding and empathy to the events they encounter. Opportunities to worship with other schools within the Trust connect pupils with a wider worshipping community. Collective worship at major Christian festivals takes place in partnership with the local church. This allows pupils to see an authentic faith being lived out in worship. Members of the church are regular visitors to the school. Their support is welcomed, and their expertise enhances the collective worship in the school.

As a reflection of the vision to shape the whole child, pupils are effectively encouraged to seek justice and take responsibility. This means they are active within their community and have an impact on the wider world. Membership of the school council and other leadership posts are sought-after positions, and the school ensures that pupils' voices are heard. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their environment and play their part



in their community. A recent campaign led by the pupils for new playground equipment was successful. Pupils impact positively on the lives of others. Supporting the local foodbank as part of the Harvest and Advent celebrations was enthusiastically embraced by pupils. Pupils act with compassion, for example, fundraising with a local charity to support a friend. Teachers encourage the pupils to make ethical choices. For example, pupils choose which charity the school will support each year.

The RE provision is a notable strength of this school. The subject is given high status within the timetable. Very strong subject leadership ensures that the teaching is ambitious and very effective. Teachers and other staff are well supported and are confident to deliver high quality learning about Christianity, other faiths and worldviews. There are very effective ways of sharing ideas and expertise across the Trust. A shared portal allows staff to share resources with colleagues in other schools. This makes planning more efficient. Monitoring is done well and helps develop the skills of teachers further. This ensures pupil progress is a priority. The curriculum is designed to ensure key learning is revisited, reinforced and deepened over time. Pupils articulate their views about different faiths and worldviews. This means that the learning has a long-term impact.

In line with its vision, the school has developed a culture where supportive relationships are well developed between members of the school. School leaders, including governors and trust leaders, prioritise wellbeing to support pupils and adults to thrive. Staff articulate a very supportive approach to their personal and professional needs. This in turn ensures that the staff team are very caring towards each other. There is a strong nurturing ethos which supports pupil wellbeing and encourages them to thrive. Pupils know they are safe and cared for. For example, they can explain very clearly what kindness or respect look like in the classroom, the playground and at home. A carefully planned buddy system ensures that older pupils lovingly support younger ones as they join the school. Transitions are carefully managed so pupils settle quickly into school and leave with confidence and self-assurance. A calm and orderly environment is seen throughout the school. Mutual care and respect mean that both pupils and adults thrive in this supportive and caring school.

Information

Address	School Rd, Hurst, Reading RG10 0DR		
Date	20 January 2025	URN	109972
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	139
Diocese	Oxford		
MAT	The Keys Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Sarah Hilling		
Chair of Governors	Catherine Westerling		
Chair of Trust	David Horrocks		
Inspector	Gill Jackson		