



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England VA Primary School, Bucknell	
Address	Chapel Lawn Road, Bucknell, SY7 0AA
School vision	
<p>‘Teach children how they should live, and they will remember it all their lives.’ Proverbs 22:6</p> <p>We are a caring Church Federation bringing together and serving many communities. We provide nurturing environments that facilitate learning for all. We encourage everybody to become confident, sociable and responsible citizens who achieve to the best of their ability in preparation for a fulfilling future.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders clearly understand how St. Mary’s Christian vision is rooted in the context of the Bucknell community. This drives the strategic actions of the school, contributing significantly to the flourishing of all. • Inspired by the vision of wanting all to achieve their best, leaders have actively created a nurturing, inclusive, learning environment. Staff ensure vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are well supported. As a result, all pupils achieve and thrive. • Invitational, inclusive and inspiring, collective worship is a powerful expression of the school’s Christian vision and values. Pupils and adults cherish calm and peaceful opportunities for reflection and prayer, enhancing the spiritual growth of all. • Relationships are excellent, with pupils and adults valued for their uniqueness. Leaders use overwhelming Christian love to break down barriers to enhance good mental health for all. As a result, a compassionate culture has been established where everybody is treated well. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed a shared understanding and language of spirituality. Use this to plan a variety of spiritual experiences across the curriculum that enrich the spiritual life of all. • Expand the religious education (RE) curriculum so that pupils understand and appreciate Christianity as a global, diverse faith. • Extend the range of activities for pupils to broaden their understanding of injustice. Use this to empower pupils to become positive agents for change within their local community and further afield. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>St. Mary’s is a school that lovingly embraces all. Leaders know and understand the lived experience of the Bucknell community. The school is part of the Blue Hills Federation that shares the same headteacher and governing body. The joint Christian vision unites the federation schools but is individually tailored to each school’s context. Staff have actively worked with the diocese on</p>	



developing the uniqueness of St. Mary's vision. Therefore, all staff understand the school's vision, of teaching children how they should live, rooted in Proverbs 22:6. Leaders put the school's vision at the centre of evaluation and action planning, sharing responsibility for reviewing the impact. Committed governors understand their strategic role well. They make bold funding decisions, leading to successful school improvement. Excellent partnerships with the federation and the diocese broaden opportunities for effective staff training. As a result, high quality learning, care and support are at the heart of St. Mary's, nurturing the flourishing of all.

The vision of teaching children how to live inspires the school's carefully designed, inclusive curriculum. Leaders are driven by an unwavering commitment to ensure everyone achieves to the best of their ability. They rightly recognise how their unique, rural context impacts on pupils, by limiting their understanding of diversity and the wider world. Consequently, investing in well-considered resources, such as 'Jigsaw,' and 'Young Citizens' has resulted in a relevant and aspiring curriculum. Informed by the school's vision, there is a clear intention within curriculum planning to overcome identified barriers to learning. Staff use strategies learnt through training, such as 'Anxiety Gremlins,' to effectively support personalised provision for pupils. Parents value the way in which leaders listen to concerns and work hard to provide what is needed for individual pupils. Thereby, pupils achieve well and succeed. Questionnaire feedback demonstrates the many ways the school is having a transformational impact on the lives of pupils. One pupil commented, 'No one at St. Mary's gave up on me.' The breadth of extra-curricular activities further expands pupils' perspectives, helping them to achieve their aspirations. Therefore, all pupils, including the most vulnerable and those with additional needs, flourish. Pupils reflect thoughtfully on life's big questions as they arise within lessons and some opportunities are mapped across the curriculum. However, a shared, whole-school understanding and language of spirituality is not established. Thus, planned opportunities that foster spirituality across the curriculum are in the early stages of development.

Invitational and inclusive, collective worship offers daily moments of prayer, reflection and stillness. Older and younger pupils enter worship together, radiating calm and reverence. These moments allow pupils and adults to engage and reflect on the meaning of worship themes, enhancing their spiritual development. Singing is exuberant and deeply appreciated by all as a joyous way to praise. Leaders have created a carefully planned and sequenced programme of themes, underpinned by biblical texts. This develops pupils' understanding of Bible stories. As a result, pupils link the school's vision and values to the Bible, enriching their spiritual thinking. Pupils fully participate throughout worship, with staff lovingly supporting pupils with SEND to contribute. All pupils' thoughts and contributions are valued and acted upon, deepening their engagement. Local church members lead worship, sharing Bible stories in relevant and interesting ways. Families cherish sharing in this breadth of worship in school and Church, enhancing the spiritual life of all. Governors and pupils thoughtfully evaluate collective worship and its impact. Leaders use worship feedback effectively to ensure the Christian vision contributes significantly to the spiritual flourishing of the school community.

True to the Christian vision, a nurturing culture, where everyone is celebrated for their uniqueness, is shared and fully embedded. It fosters excellent relationships based on love and trust that bind this small school together. Pupils are profoundly respectful and polite. They behave with grace and kindness to one other and to all that visit the school. Pupils say that disagreements are rare but are part of life. They have a clear understanding of how to forgive and resolve their differences. Staff are advocates for every child and family in the school, as well as for each other. Senior leaders steadfastly support staff personally, as well as professionally, by encouraging them to 'achieve their best'. For example, leaders help staff in pursuing nationally accredited qualifications to enhance their practice and expertise. Staff wellbeing is paramount for governors and prioritised on every meeting agenda. Parents are listened to and appreciate the pastoral care offered by every member of staff. They enthuse about how well relationships work at school. One parent stated, 'School

shines a light on issues and helps everyone to form better relationships'. Consequently, everyone within the school community is firmly supported, resulting in pupils and adults feeling valued and being treated well.

The vision of nurturing sociable and responsible citizens underpins a curriculum rich in opportunities for pupils to learn about justice and responsibility. Learning about inspirational role models motivates pupils to speak out against the unfair treatment of others. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility by being active members of the school council and 'eco team'. Caring about others is evident in the fundraising actions of the school, including donating food to the local food bank. As a result, pupils confidently talk about unfairness and how they want to make a difference. For example, pupils feel strongly about broadening awareness of plastic waste. However, opportunities for pupils to make a sustainable difference as agents of change are underdeveloped.

RE is highly prioritised in the school. The RE curriculum is skilfully planned and guided by the locally agreed syllabus and the Understanding Christianity resource. Teachers use a variety of engaging activities to stimulate pupils' thinking and imagination. Pupils say they enjoy RE lessons and speak knowledgeably about worldviews and a range of world religions. Deeply thoughtful connections are made by pupils during lessons. For example, pupils articulately discuss the links between Christian, Hindu and scientific beliefs about Creation. However, pupils demonstrate a lack of understanding about Christianity as a global, diverse faith. This limits pupils' ability to broaden their knowledge about diversity in religions and to explore their own and others' views. The subject leader is mentored well by experienced leaders from the federation. Further benefits come from the supportive partnership with the diocese who provide access to current training, enhancing teachers' subject knowledge. A range of assessment strategies provide an accurate picture of pupil achievement. As a result, teaching is adapted well to meet the needs of all learners. Robust monitoring and evaluation confirm that pupils make good progress.

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	17 October 2023	URN	123537
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	51
Diocese	Hereford		
MAT/Federation			
Executive Headteacher	Anna Cook		
Chair	Di Cosgrove		
Inspector	Beverley Roberts	No.	2122