

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mark's Church of England School Brighton			
Address	Manor Road, Brighton, BN2 5EA		
Date of inspection	21 March 2019	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary school
Diocese	Chichester	URN	114545

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Requires improvement
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Requires improvement
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Requires improvement

School context

St Mark's is a smaller than average sized primary school with 161 pupils on roll. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school has a diversity of faiths within the school community.

The school's Christian vision

AIM HIGH. BELIEVE. ACHIEVE.

Where every child matters and every day counts

'Let your light shine' Matthew 5:16

Key findings

- All stakeholders know and articulate the recent addition to the vision of 'Let your light shine' Matthew 5:16, but this has not had sufficient time to impact on the school community or drive improvements.
- Leaders and governors have not monitored or evaluated the impact of the school's Christian vision or the effectiveness of St Mark's as a church school, resulting in slow developments since the last denominational inspection.
- The caring climate of this school is enriched by the school's HERO values and the vision. Strong relationships throughout the school nurture and support each individual member of the school family.
- The daily acts of worship or assemblies foster the caring ethos of the school but not all of these daily acts include elements of Christian worship.
- Recent staff training for religious education (RE) has enthused staff and is improving RE provision.

Areas for development

- Ground the school's vision and associated values in a clear theology so that improvements and developments have a Christian narrative.
- School leaders, including governors, undertake regular and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school's effectiveness as a church school and of RE so that senior leaders have a sharper knowledge of standards of teaching and learning in RE and can ensure that all pupils are challenged.
- Give more opportunities for governors, the school community and pupils of all ages to evaluate daily collective worship so that practice is refined, spiritual development opportunities increased and pupils' understanding of Christian worship is deepened.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

St Mark's is at the beginning of their journey of making their vision a Christian vision, their values Christian values and of grounding both in theology. The school has recently underpinned its Christian vision with the Bible quote 'Let your light shine' Matthew 5:16. and the school's golden rules with Jesus' teaching to, 'treat others as you would like to be treated'. The school aims to use its well-established HERO values of hope, optimism, resilience and energy to encourage pupils to aim high, believe and achieve. One of these values is the focus for collective worship each term through Bible stories. The beautifully presented reflection areas in classes and around the school are based on the term's value to deepen the pupils' thinking about the impact the value has on their own lives. However leaders' monitoring focuses on the implementation of the reflection areas rather than the impact on pupils. Senior leaders confidently articulate and encourage the school's vision. However leaders and governors have not monitored or evaluated the effectiveness of St Mark's as a church school, which has resulted in the school only recently addressing the issues from the previous denominational inspection. Although, teachers have visited local church schools to broaden their experience of working in a church school, leaders and governors have not attended sufficient diocesan training to develop their understanding of what a church school is. The school has recently shown a commitment to working in partnership with the diocesan effectiveness partner and has taken advice and guidance on improving the school's effectiveness as a church school.

The strong partnerships with local organisations such as Roedean School, which St Mark's has actively sought to form, provide a wealth of enrichment and spiritual experiences. These experiences provide depth and support to the school's new Christian vision and enable pupils to continue to flourish spiritually. To ensure the rounded development of the whole child the school is working with its partners to put measures in place to improve each child's academic achievement. Key Stage 2 outcomes have declined rapidly since the last denominational inspection and outcomes remain well-below national expectations.

The HERO values are established and embedded and aim to encourage pupils to bring aspirations for life, enthusiasm for learning, strength to take risks and faith in their own success but the curriculum provided by the school has not supported pupils to 'shine' academically. The school addresses global issues regularly through collective worship and has supported a wide variety of national charities. Aspects of the school's charity work, such as the recent fund raising for 'jeans for genes day' suggest pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of how to be advocates for change.

Positive relationships abound and, as a result, staff and pupils feel valued in belonging to this school family. One Year 5 pupil commented 'everyone in our class are really good friends'. Parents affirm that the school is a nurturing community where they are always made to feel welcome and to which they feel a great sense of belonging. The school provides a wealth of support for children and families with diverse needs some of which is beginning to impact on pupil achievement. School council gives a voice to pupils and provides opportunities for them to contribute to planning for worship/assembly and lead aspects of the school's charity work. It is clear that the school embraces the spirit of the 'Valuing All God's Children' document.

Relationships between pupils are strong. All pupils are united in their answers that there is no bullying at St Mark's. The school has pupils with a rich diversity of cultures and faiths who value their friendships with each other greatly. This reflects the school's commitment to an ethos where all pupils treat each other with dignity and respect. RE teaching promotes this ethos with a good balance between Christian and other faiths, and visits to places of worship also enhance pupils' appreciation and understanding of the beliefs and customs of faiths practised in the area.

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The time set aside to gather together each day sets the context of St Mark's as a caring community. The programme is planned by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher and is led by a variety of staff, visitors and

clergy. A candle is lit to remind pupils that Jesus is the light of the world and this was the basis of the new Christian addition to the vision. However, because assemblies are not always securely Christian and because pupils do not have the opportunity to worship in church, pupils' experiences of Christian worship are limited. The headteacher's worship is based around the termly HERO value and is illustrated by the teachings of Jesus or Bible stories; pupils do not always connect the worship stories to the Bible. The local church leads Christian celebration services and the leavers' service every year in school, these are planned and led by the clergy and the pupils together. Brighton Christian Mission lead worship once every fortnight, which provides pupils with the opportunity to experience a diversity of Christian traditions. Pupils value prayer and reflection and class reflection areas are well used by all pupils, pupils' prayers are read in worship and prayers are said before lunch which nurtures spiritual development appropriately. One Year 2 pupil commented 'I write a prayer quite a lot. It is helpful'. The school is seeking to offer further opportunities for prayer and reflection in a beautiful and peaceful outside reflection area which is designed as a church and faces the direction of St George's Church and is currently under construction. Pupils, governors and the wider school community are not given the opportunity to evaluate collective worship and therefore do not drive improvements or developments.



The effectiveness of RE Requires Improvement

Staff have recently attended two RE training days, which were organised with the local schools' deanery group. Improvements in the learning opportunities given to pupils in RE lessons since those training days can clearly be seen. RE lessons take place weekly and the school holds additional themed RE days such as their annual 'Lent Day'. Pupils readily demonstrate the depth of knowledge and understanding that they gained from the most recent of these. However, the RE books show that pupils are not given sufficient opportunities for developing age appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis or interpretation. RE is assessed in line with English and maths, however this has not led to sufficient challenge for all pupils. Leaders and governors have not monitored RE regularly enough to drive developments in RE.

Headteacher	Jane Fendley
Inspector's name and number	Jan Meyer 921