

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England Junior Academy

Vision

'They will soar on wings like eagles.'

At St Mary's, we nurture respectful and responsible global citizens who contribute to their communities with compassion and courage.

Young minds grow with God's love and an ambitious curriculum for all, to enable everyone to flourish as they 'soar on wings like eagles' and 'live life in all its fullness.'

St Mary's Church of England Junior Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Notable Strengths

- The school's Christian vision, which aligns with that of St Benet's Multi-Academy Trust, underpins an exceptional culture of care and compassion. It is deeply rooted in the everyday practice of the school, enabling pupils and adults to thrive.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who are considered vulnerable are nurtured and empowered at St Mary's. They are loved for who they are and wholeheartedly supported to overcome any barriers to learning. This often leads to transformational change for pupils and their families.
- The ambitious school curriculum has been thoughtfully designed to match the needs of pupils and widen their horizons. They are keen to participate in the extra-curricular and enrichment activities. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and become confident and reflective learners.
- Strong partnerships between the school and local churches enable pupils and adults to experience a rich and varied programme of collective worship. Consequently, worship impacts positively on their spiritual development.
- Wide-ranging training and development opportunities for staff are a priority for the school and trust. This strengthens curriculum provision and results in adults flourishing professionally.

Development Points

- Equip adults and pupils with a deeper, shared understanding of spirituality. This is to enhance the impact of planned spiritual experiences and opportunities for reflection.
- Extend how the religious education (RE) curriculum enriches pupils' knowledge of diversity within Christianity. This is to develop understanding of Christianity as a global living faith.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

The school's Christian vision has been carefully devised by dedicated leaders to ensure it reflects the needs of the community. The biblical encouragement to 'soar on wings like eagles' underpins the school's high aspirations for staff and pupils. It has led to strategic decisions being made to enable pupils to thrive. For example, the creation of a compassionate inclusion team ensures the needs of SEND pupils, and those considered vulnerable, are well met. Christian values are promoted to help pupils and staff live out the vision. A different value, such as respect, is thoughtfully highlighted each half term. It is discussed and examined in worship and reflected upon by pupils in class. They are inspired to achieve a 'soar' award that makes the vision a living reality for them. Pupils also reference the vision and values when making choices around their behaviour and attitudes. This contributes to them treating one another kindly and taking pleasure in the success of others.

Vision and Curriculum

Pupils are inspired by the creative, diverse curriculum. Enquiry questions are embedded, helping them to become confident and thoughtful learners. Outward looking leaders have added rich and interesting experiences into the curriculum to broaden pupils' horizons. Residential trips and visits, such as those to London, enhance the curriculum and are considered an exciting and important part of school life. As a result, pupils enjoy school. In line with the vision, leaders organise events, such as the Victory in Europe Day celebration, which involve members of the wider community. In this way, the school has strengthened its position as a focal point in the town. Subject leaders have begun planning specific opportunities for spirituality within the curriculum, with the result that these experiences are beginning to be embedded. However, pupils and adults do not have a clear, shared understanding of spiritual development. This limits the way in which leaders can effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of this work. Pupils who have SEND and those who are deemed to be vulnerable know that committed staff will adapt their teaching for them. This is achieved through various interventions, including individualised provision and working closely with families. In this way, these pupils flourish.

Worship and Spirituality

Daily collective worship provides a valued opportunity for pupils and adults to unite as a school community. Leaders ensure that it is inclusive, for example by recording it for pupils who are unable to attend. A highly effective partnership with local churches has a positive impact on the planning and provision for worship. Pupils and adults enjoy collective worship because those who lead it make it interesting and engaging. Leaders and clergy plan together to ensure the school's Christian values are explored in a variety of ways. These include through drama, Bible stories and joyful singing. Events in the Christian calendar are celebrated with services at the local church. Worship contributes to spiritual growth by reminding pupils and adults how they should treat others. Weekly class worship enables staff to adapt themes to the needs and interests of their class. This means that more pupils have the opportunity to participate. The school's and trust's evaluation of worship is beneficial because it engages the views of pupils and adults. This, in turn, ensures that worship is meaningful, contributing to the spiritual development of the whole school.

Religious Education

The RE curriculum is well-structured to enable pupils to learn about a range of religions and worldviews. A supportive partnership with the diocese and trust provides effective training for staff. RE lessons promote an understanding of beliefs and how they affect the way others live. This is often through big questions, such as 'Is it reasonable to believe in God?' Floor books demonstrate the creative responses pupils can make in RE, for example through art and storytelling. Enrichment activities, supported by teams from local churches, broaden



the RE curriculum. These include interactive days for pupils to learn about key Christian festivals. Exciting experiences promote a meaningful understanding of world faiths, for example a visit to compare a cathedral and mosque in Norwich. As a result, pupils enjoy the subject and are receiving a well-planned and engaging curriculum. They speak confidently about their learning. However, the understanding of Christianity as a diverse global faith is limited. This has rightly been identified by leaders as an area for school development.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

True to the Christian vision, pupils are learning how to be responsible global citizens and make a difference. They take pride in the leadership opportunities offered to them, for example to be subject ambassadors or eco-warriors. Care for the village and wider world is evident in pupils' actions. These include forming close links with local care homes and inviting residents to school events. School council representatives work with the town council to address local issues, such as improving the pedestrian crossing. Such actions positively contribute to relationships with the local community. Leaders' engagement with the diocesan Racial Justice Network has strengthened pupils' understanding of fairness and responsibility. Carefully chosen reading resources are used to reflect on other national and global issues, providing opportunities for spiritual growth. Consequently, pupils feel empowered to take action in support of others, including local and global charity fundraising. The trust's recent promotion of 'immeasurably more' awards encourages pupils to further extend their sense of responsibility towards others.

Vision and School Culture

Compassionate leaders seek to serve the whole school community and endeavour to treat everyone well. The Christian vision creates an inclusive ethos where pupils and adults feel valued and trusted. As a result, the quality of relationships within the school is strong. Pupils confidently report that adults in the school care for them. The school's behaviour policy is based on a restorative approach and is consistently applied by staff. It supports pupils to treat each other with respect and understanding. The impact of this is that pupils accept each other's differences. Members of the inclusion team dedicate themselves to overcoming barriers to learning. Parents and carers are confident they can approach the school with concerns about their children and be listened to. This has led to the school supporting pupils, parents and carers during particularly difficult times, such as bereavement and financial hardship. For some families this has led to transformational change. Leadership decisions are made to ensure staff development is a high priority. Strong partnerships with the trust and diocese enhance opportunities for high quality training. This means that staff, including newly appointed teachers, demonstrate high levels of confidence and feel well supported.

Information

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| Address | Swan Lane, Long Stratton, Norwich, Norfolk, NR152UY | | |
| Date | 26 January 2026 | URN | 137311 |
| Type of school | Academy | No. of pupils | 148 |
| Diocese | Norwich | | |
| MAT | Diocese of Norwich St Benet's Multi-Academy Trust | | |
| Headteacher | Laura Richardson | | |
| Chair of Governors | Bruce Gordon | | |
| Inspector | Neil Henery | | |