



SIAS Report Form

St. Mary's school has 110 pupils on roll, serving the parishes of Bitteswell and Ashby Parva. It is a popular, over subscribed school, with 50% of pupils coming from outside the parishes. The building and grounds are very well cared for, and an attractive quiet garden has recently been added. The current headteacher is due to retire, and her successor has been appointed from September 2009.

Summary Judgment

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Mary's CE Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The school is totally committed to its Christian foundation, and to serving the community by providing education of the highest quality. The school's mission statement "Learn, Love and Believe" underpins every aspect of it's work, allowing each pupil to flourish, and to progress in spiritual awareness.

Established strengths

- The headteacher has a clear Christian vision, and high expectations of learners.
- Provision for learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective.
- Each pupil is valued as a unique individual, and feels secure and confident in school.
- The school receives very strong support from the governing body and the church.

Focus for development

- Provide support for the new headteacher, to instill growth in quality of provision.
- Investigate ways to develop communication links with an overseas school

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners.

St. Mary's has a warm, welcoming Christian atmosphere, in which pupils and adults clearly feel nurtured, both as individuals, and as part of a team. Christian values are modelled by school adults, and pupils respond well to their high expectations. Behaviour is exemplary, and pupils are caring and confident, both in their relationships with each other, and with staff. The school recently worked with a local potter, to produce panels, funded by the parents' association, depicting Bible stories for each classroom, serving as a reminder of the Christian ethos. Pupils are proud of these, and keen to point out their individual contributions. A shady quiet garden, with attractive planters and seating, gives an opportunity for quiet reflection. A child pointed out creatures on the planters, which reminded him of God's beautiful world. Pupils and parents speak of the strong links with St. Mary's Church, and the active involvement of church personnel in the life of the school. Links with a Voluntary Aided school in Southwark, and a residential visit to Launde Abbey with a Leicester city school enable pupils to share and gain insight into both similar and different cultural experiences. Supporting a wide range of charities helps pupils to understand the lives of those less fortunate. Parents are regularly welcomed into school, enabling them to communicate with staff, and to feel part of their children's education. Parents of reception pupils are involved in the Learning Journey with their children, and spoke of how valuable this is. Information and curriculum meetings keep all parents well informed. The headteacher holds a coffee morning each term, to thank everyone who has helped in any way. School councillors are confident in their role, and feel that their views are respected and acted upon. Other pupils approach them with ideas, which they discuss at their meetings. Two councillors are part of the Lutterworth Area School Council, and spoke of their pride at being chosen to represent their school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Worship is an integral part of school life for all pupils and staff, following a programme of themes which reflect the Christian calendar. Using an interactive whiteboard has enhanced worship, providing visual images as a focus, and making it more interactive for pupils, for example when they followed an action song with great enthusiasm. Pupils are keen to read prayers, Bible readings, and answer questions, giving thoughtful and mature responses. The Lord's Prayer, and the school prayer are used, and are very familiar to pupils. They enter and leave the hall quietly to music, and periods of stillness and reflection enhance the experience. On some occasions pupils play instruments while children enter and leave, and all contributions are valued and celebrated. The worship table, with a Bible, cross, flowers and candle provides a focus, but is also accessible to pupils at other times. A Year 3 child gave a mature description of using a prayer pebble from the table when his cat was ill. Personnel from St. Mary's Church regularly lead worship, and pupils enjoy celebrating major festivals and the annual leavers' service in the church. Parents value the opportunity to attend worship, both in school and in church, when members of the local community are also invited. They spoke of the excellent introduction to Christian lifestyles provided by the school, and felt that their children would carry this forward when they moved on. Pupils spoke of their enjoyment when visitors such as the vicar, the churchwarden and Lifeline, a local group lead worship. Planning is very thorough, and acts of worship are carefully monitored and evaluated by governors and staff, to ensure consistently high standards.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.

Religious education is well taught, enabling virtually all pupils to achieve a very good understanding of Christianity and other major world religions. The policy is well written, with appropriate aims, in line with the diocesan syllabus, and is delivered through a two year rolling programme. Pupils in Years 1-6 are taught by the headteacher, using a range of teaching and learning styles to stimulate interaction and discussion, with Foundation stage pupils taught within their own framework. The vicar and churchwarden are also involved in teaching religious education in school. A broad, balanced curriculum, based round the Christian framework of the school, and the Mission Statement "Learn, Love and Believe," gives pupils an excellent understanding of Christianity and other faiths. Progress is carefully monitored, with on going assessment informing planning, and enabling pupils to make excellent progress. Governors and staff produced an action plan to improve resources and provision, with the purchase of interactive whiteboards enabling pupils to access web sites. This was used effectively in a lesson on pilgrimage, where images of Mecca stimulated discussion. Good quality displays, illustrating Christianity and other faiths are evident throughout the school. Year 3 and 4 pupils studying Hinduism, were keen to talk about artefacts and pictures in their display. Reception pupils showed understanding of the creation story, and provided thoughtful answers to questions about caring for pets. Pupils visit St. Mary's Church, where the churchwarden explains various services such as Communion, Baptism and Weddings. Pupils explore the building, and seek out signs and symbols which are uniquely Christian. The Reception / Year 1 teacher recently set up a "church" in the role play area, enabling younger children to act out what they had learned from their visits to the church. Older pupils visit Leicester Cathedral, and places of worship for other faiths. Teaching in religious education enhances the very strong provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enabling all pupils to make good progress.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school, as a church school is outstanding.

The headteacher has a clear Christian vision for the school. She provides outstanding leadership, with strong support from the governing body and staff. The Christian ethos, and mission statement are very clearly stated in all school documentation. The school is a welcoming, inclusive environment, with a happy, family atmosphere. Christian symbols and artefacts are evident in all areas of the school, and pupils accept the importance of belonging to a Christian community. Foundation governors and senior staff have used the Self Evaluation Toolkit to provide very effective monitoring and evaluation of the school as an Anglican school. The school has produced an effective action plan for community cohesion, which provides pupils with a good sense of their place in the local and global community. The school is keen to provide a link with an overseas school, to strengthen this. Foundation governors meet regularly with the headteacher, to provide support, and discuss developments. They provide reports to the governing body on worship and religious education. Parent and pupil questionnaires enable all stakeholders to have a voice, and parents feel that their views are important to the school. They are pleased with the education their children receive, with the Christian ethos of the school, and the strong links with the parish church.