THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND EDUCATION OFFICE

The Methodist Church

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Church of England Primary Academy	
Stonehouse Road, Hadleigh, Ipswich IP7 5BH	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	**Outstanding**
Diocese	**St Edmundsbury and Ipswich**
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	1 February 2016
Name of multi-academy trust	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi Academy Trust
Date of inspection	24 February 2017
Date of last inspection	December 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Academy 142597
Headteacher	Andrew Frolish
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

Currently there are 155 pupils on roll, with a further 26 in the nursery. St Mary's converted to academy status in February 2016 as part of the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi Academy Trust [MAT]. This school has a highly mobile population, with a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs, on free school meals or from HM Armed Forces families. A new deputy headteacher, two newly qualified teachers and an interim parish priest have all been appointed since the last inspection.

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

- The excellent pastoral care and concern for individuals meets the pupils and their families at their point of need within an inclusive Christian family environment.
- The school's strong Christian ethos is embedded in a prayerful and meaningful pattern of worship which enriches the lives of the whole community.
- Strong leadership at all levels, which models Christian values, is embedded in the excellent partnership with the church community, ensuring the school's Christian vision and values are lived out each day.

Areas to improve

- Extend pupils' understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith and enable them to meet people of faith more frequently to nurture their spiritual and cultural development.
- Enrich pupils' understanding of the symbolism of the Trinity as an integral part of their worshipping experience in a church school.

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

St Mary's core vision and purpose to 'believe, inspire and achieve' is enshrined in its chosen Christian values of respect, honesty, forgiveness and friendship. Such values are rooted in Bible stories and lived out daily. They are explicitly taught and rewarded, resulting in excellent relationships and behaviour. One of the ways in which St Mary's stands out is its Christian commitment to providing exemplary pastoral care and concern for every individual within this inclusive family community, meeting the pupils and their families at their point of need. For example, pupils new to the school community, such as those from the nearby HM Armed Forces community, say they have

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been made welcome at St Mary's where 'lots of people want to be your friend'. Any vulnerable pupils are integrated quickly and supported, enabling them to make friendships. A dedicated pastoral support worker provides daily nurture sessions, working closely with parents and outside agencies. This is immensely valued by the pupils, parents and staff. Every child is expected to do well, underpinned by the belief that all children can achieve. Consequently, progress for all groups of pupils is good, with some disadvantaged pupils making better than expected progress. Christian values, worship and religious education [RE] make a good contribution to the school's Christian character and to pupils' personal and academic development as they prepare pupils to be the best they can be in life. Pupils are excited about using their new spiritual garden, which provides an important space for calm reflection, and welcome more worship outdoors, enriching their spiritual lives. Fundraising activities, such as donating money for toilet twinning and helping to build churches in other countries raises their global awareness. They say that RE is 'really challenging' and they like learning about different faiths, cultures and communities. They recall 'a visitor from Africa who sang Christian songs in African'. They are looking forward to two Kagera days already planned as part of the diocesan link with Kagera and say they would like to explore these links more. In addition, pupils welcome meeting people of faith more frequently as well as visiting their places of worship, 'like a mosque for instance'. The school acknowledges this as an area for development, but has not made any firm plans for achieving it.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Inspiring and prayerful collective worship, rooted in a meaningful liturgical pattern which pupils and adults are now familiar with, is at the heart of St Mary's worshipping life. Key aspects of gathering, engaging, responding and sending with a focus on values, such as forgiveness, are integral to daily worship. For example, pupils reflecting on the story of Zacchaeus and applying it to daily life say, 'You don't have to be a Christian or close to God for Jesus to help you. Let go the past, don't keep it with you. Like Zacchaeus, improve yourself, see what you've done wrong.' Clergy from a variety of local churches, staff and pupils all lead worship. There are very good links with St Mary's Church through its interim parish priest and the curate. For example, eucharistic cafe services take place in church on Fridays, to which parents and the local community are invited. Pupils helped to design this order of service. Pupils are involved in leading aspects of worship, such as writing and reading their own thoughtful prayers, acting out the Bible story linked to the value, and in planning class worship as well as church services. For example, they lead the call and response and the words of dismissal at the start and close of worship. Pupils value the importance of gathering together for worship, commenting, 'we are all Christians and we believe Jesus is always with us.' They go on to say that worship in church 'helps bring you a step closer to God' and 'helps us realise the church is all around the world'. Pupils are growing in the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They explain,' When we gather, we say The Lord is here, His spirit is with us. There are three people in The Holy Trinity but they are all linked to each other. When God is mentioned, I think about Jesus and The Holy Spirit. God's one with everyone.' One pupil added, 'I didn't read Bibles a lot. Now I realise what is happening with God and Jesus, it's quite important.' However, many pupils said they would like to know more about The Holy Trinity. The school and clergy recognise the need to explore its symbolism in worship to enrich the spiritual lives of pupils and adults alike. Following a day on prayer in November 2016, teachers and pupils have put together a book of prayers to be published for use in worship. As a result, prayer remains a constant focus, in worship, in class and in church and sometimes at home. One pupil praised the value of prayer, bringing them closer to God, saying, 'I feel lifted off the ground.' Pupil evaluations on worship, such as responding to class worship about courage, are gathered regularly.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE enjoys a high profile at St Mary's and is well resourced. Whilst the RE team is relatively new in post, they have worked enthusiastically with the diocesan RE adviser on the Emmanuel units of work which support the RE curriculum. This includes writing the unit on Stewardship and Wisdom. Monitoring which includes tracking and assessment is formalised, with the RE subject leaders, a relatively newly qualified teacher and a teaching assistant, working alongside the diocesan adviser. Much has been achieved, which has included training for staff to help them teach the new units of work more confidently. RE is valued and pupil progress and achievement is good, with the Emmanuel units becoming embedded. These units have included a focus on incarnation and salvation, with engaging activities, using an enquiry approach to learning. For example, using visual aids such as a zip to demonstrate the concept of reconciliation. Consequently, RE reinforces the school's values and helps nurture pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] development. As a result, pupils enjoy their RE, with one boy saying that RE is now 'epic'. Pupils also have a very good knowledge of key Christian concepts and can relate the Christian story of incarnation and salvation very well. This is helped by the 'Inspire' workshops run by the church community at key times in the church year, such as Advent, Epiphany, Easter and Pentecost. Consequently, pupils know the symbolism of Epiphany and can relate the events of Holy Week in great detail. They explain Ascension as 'Jesus rising up to heaven and staying with his Father.' They recall Pentecost as the Holy Spirit coming to the disciples ' in a gust of wind so they spoke in different languages and people thought they were disrespectful and drunk. They believed that Jesus was still

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with them.' In their learning, pupils are actively engaged in their lessons, make thoughtful responses and achieve well. For example, the youngest children light candles and pray to celebrate joys and sorrows in the school community. Year 1 explore the best symbols of Jesus' death and resurrection at Easter and how they might mirror Jesus humbly serving others. Year 5 and 6 engage with the value of thankfulness for God's creation from the point of view of a Christian astronaut, such as Buzz Aldrin. The RE action plan has already identified a day to focus on The Lord's Prayer as well as the two Kagera days, showing how the school is addressing Christianity as a worldwide faith. The school is planning to use local contacts to answer questions about how their faith makes a difference to their lives. Meeting people of faith more frequently is an area for development acknowledged by the school. They plan to address this through their partnership with others, but this is currently not in place.

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

Strong leadership at all levels ensures St Mary's vision and values underpin the priorities and decisions made to support the pupils and their families. The emotional wellbeing of pupils and adults is one such priority for the governors. They support new and experienced staff alike, with bespoke visits and training provided by the diocese and the MAT. This includes hosting RE training for other schools for the local pyramid of schools as well as providing support for local schools. For example, the deputy headteacher is seconded to another church school three days a week. In addition to the diocesan RE adviser working closely with the RE subject leaders at St Mary's, the local RE network with other schools, including those within the MAT, are very supportive. Worship and RE both meet statutory requirements. Pupils have a voice and have their own version of the school development plan with the school's Christian vision and values to believe, inspire and achieve at its core. Governors' rigorous, termly monitoring of worship and RE is integral to the monitoring cycle, with all governors sharing in this role. In addition, the standards committee will challenge pupil progress and achievement, should any groups of pupils not be performing well academically. Areas from the previous inspection have been addressed. For example, effective RE teaching with a focus on assessment is now annually reported to parents. The excellent partnership with St Mary's Church ensures church and community links are good, with the church planting bulbs for the spiritual garden and a display board at church to celebrate the school's work with the parish community. Parents cite the 'Porch Project', which supports young people when they have left St Mary's. They say they have learned much from their children about RE and values. Above all, they praise the 'extended family, where staff know each child as an individual'. Staff speak highly of 'unconditional love' and this 'second family, committed to our children, but amazingly supportive of one another.'

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