

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Mary Dean's Church of England Primary School and Nursery

Vision

'A school family, learning for life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)
We are a nurturing family, growing together for a flourishing future.

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

Strengths

- Leaders give careful thought to the evolution of the school's Christian vision to meet the changing needs of the community. This leads to the vision being embedded with a deep and meaningful understanding of family and flourishing.
- At Mary Dean's, pupils, adults and families are treated well. Leaders are committed to the flourishing of the school family.
- The provision for pupils and families who are vulnerable makes a positive difference. The actions of leaders are driven by the vision and is leading to pupils and adults flourishing.
- Daily collective worship is an important part of the life of Mary Dean's. Changes that leaders are making are having a positive impact and supporting pupils' spiritual development.
- The work of the school, supported by the academy trust, to strengthen the provision of religious education (RE) is embedding.

Development Points

- Ensure leaders maintain a clear awareness of the impact of the school's Christian vision through robust monitoring and evaluation. This is to ensure that leaders are assured that their plans are having the desired impact and lead to flourishing.
- Support pupils to see that their charitable acts are examples of them living by the vision. This will help them to understand that they are actively taking responsibility and seeking justice for themselves, others and God's creation.
- Further embed the language of spirituality used across the school. This will help pupils better understand their spiritual development and how worship and the curriculum are important parts of this.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision of Mary Dean's, framed in family and flourishing, is at the heart of this school. Time has been given to revisiting the vision as leadership changed, and the school joined an academy trust. A clear focus of this has been to root it in scripture and better understand the meaning of family and flourishing. This has led to a deep understanding of these words. The vision, lived out through Christian values, are the roots of the school's work. These are well known and understood by pupils who embrace them and use them as a guide for their lives. Those joining Mary Dean's receive a warm, Christian welcome which leads to a sense of belonging. Leaders' commitment to the vision is clear and drives the decisions they make. They are passionate that the legacy of Mary Dean, who founded the school to serve the community, lives on through their work. Leaders within the school and academy trust have identified next steps so that the school keeps moving forward. However, monitoring of the impact of the vision is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that their evaluations drive continuous development planning.

Driven by the vision, the curriculum is an area that continues to be reviewed and honed. As changes are made, careful thought is given to ensuring that it enables pupils to flourish. Teachers look for opportunities for the school's Christian values to be lived out through the curriculum. Examples of the impact of this are seen in pupils' recognition of these and their enjoyment of learning. Leaders know their pupils well and strive to give them the appropriate support they need. They have identified where additional support is needed for those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. Pupils recognise the help they receive and the different ways in which they can learn. The school offers a range of extracurricular activities including a club for those from military families. Leaders have spent time considering how opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually is woven through the curriculum. The language of 'windows, mirrors and doors' is used to support pupils in their understanding of spirituality. They use these words with an increasing yet varying understanding of their own spiritual growth. Monitoring strategies are embedding which ensure that as changes are made, the school stays true to its vision of providing flourishing futures.

Collective worship is an important part of the daily life of Mary Dean's. Pupils and adults alike value the time given to come together as a family. There is a sense of routine during this time. Pupils engage in familiar prayers and there is a clear enjoyment of singing. They recall stories and themes and explain how these inspire them think about their own actions. Pupils and church family members enjoy it when Open the Book is part of worship and when families are invited. This helps embed the vision as members of the wider community are welcomed into this family. Leadership of this area of the school's distinctively Christian work is bringing about positive change. Adults are supported in their role as spiritual leaders and growing in confidence through structured plans and carefully selected resources. These ensure that worship is inclusive and provide clearer opportunities for the school's language of spirituality to be used. Pupils play an increasingly meaningful role during worship, and this sees them confident to lead prayer and reflections. Adults and pupils are beginning to use strategies to evaluate and measure the impact of the worship provision.

At Mary Dean's, people are treated well. Staff, pupils and families rightly value the care they are given. Leaders are committed to the flourishing of others. This is shown in the decisions they take to engage external partners and agencies to provide support. Members of the school family who are vulnerable and need help are cared for. The leadership of special educational needs and disabilities provision has brought about positive change. Systems and processes are being implemented and there is a focus on ensuring strong relationships with families. The approach of leaders is centred on the philosophy of 'nurturing to flourish,' giving families the help and encouragement they



need. Adults implement individual plans for pupils which give support and recognise their God-given talents. Leaders have brought about changes to the school's approach to encouraging good behaviour through a new policy. This is framed in the vision and Jesus' teaching about forgiveness. Pupils are supported in making and maintaining positive relationships and living physically and mentally healthy lives. Trust leaders engage in training from the diocese who in turn support school-based colleagues.

Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility both within and outside of school. Roles such as play leaders, being part of the 'vision group' or the eco-council are offered. Pupils recognise when their peers are living by the values of friendship and responsibility through these roles. They see when others are in need and where there is injustice and are determined to help where they can. Led by pupils, links are made with local charities and organisations as they seek to take responsibility for others. However, they don't necessarily connect this with the school's vision and how they are helping others have a flourishing future. Some recognise the importance of the eco-council's work as a way of caring for God's creation. Adults are exploring further partnerships to support their work and enable pupils to flourish. Those involved in the governance of the school take their responsibility seriously. Where areas need to improve, careful plans are put in place with flourishing at the heart.

The school and trust are committed to the provision, profile and priority of RE. Leaders have shown their commitment through making changes to the curriculum and classroom environment. This gives greater consistency of approach and expectations and is increasing the profile of the subject. Changes are introduced carefully and teachers are supported in their implementation. The RE curriculum is well-organised and consideration has been given when selecting resources to support pupils' learning to grow over time. Pupils enjoy their lessons and they like the different ways in which learning is presented and explored. Pupils talk confidently about how RE helps them to better understand others and make comparisons between faiths. The RE leader is well-supported by the trust through coaching and training. Leaders work hard to ensure that the RE curriculum stays true to the vision and enables pupils to flourish. They recognise the journey that this subject is on. They have made this a priority and have a clear vision for its development. Monitoring approaches are being introduced to evaluate the impact of their plans.

Information

Address	Mary Dean Avenue, Tamerton Foliot, Plymouth, PL5 4LS		
Date	11 February 2025	URN	150116
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	300
Diocese	Exeter		
MAT	First Federation Trust		
Headteacher	Donna Wilson		
Chair of Governors	Alex Walmsley		
Inspector	Lee Moscato		