



**Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report**

<b>Aston St Mary’s Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School</b>	
Address	<b>School Lane, Aston, Hertfordshire. SG2 7HA</b>
How effective is the school’s distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	<b>Excellent</b>
The impact of collective worship	<b>Excellent</b>
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	<b>Excellent</b>

<b>School’s vision</b>
<b>Every child is a treasure-small in size, growing in God’s love.</b>
At Aston School, everyone really is a treasure - small in size and growing in God's love. The love of God surrounds us all, encouraging each person to grow and develop to become the individual person they are. Our pupils leave us as citizens who care about others and God’s world.
<b>Key findings</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspirational leadership demonstrates a deeply rooted Christian vision that constantly evolves to meet the needs of pupils, their families and staff. Succession planning in developing the leaders of the future is valued as an important part of this process.</li> <li>• Exceptional inclusive support throughout high quality learning experiences ensures excellent flourishing for all.</li> <li>• Pupils confidently articulate their extensive knowledge and depth of understanding of a rich and engaging religious education (RE) curriculum. All pupils, including the most vulnerable, are enabled to achieve highly and flourish within an empowering learning environment.</li> <li>• Pupils eagerly illustrate how engaging in the planning and leading of deeply reflective collective worship nurtures their spiritual growth. However, a more formal way to gather pupil evaluation is at an early stage of development.</li> <li>• The transformational vision empowers the whole school community to be advocates for social justice and change. This is often driven by the pupils.</li> </ul>
<b>Areas for development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrich creative ways for pupils to formally evaluate the impact of collective worship on their spiritual growth. This is so that their voice can be consistently captured for future planning and action.</li> <li>• Through succession planning, ensure that leadership of RE and collective worship is sustained for current and future development. This honours the vision in policy and practice so all can flourish.</li> </ul>

### Inspection findings

This excellent Church school lives out its deeply rooted Christian vision, shining like a beacon within the community. Generations of staff, pupils and their families embody this pearl of wisdom, which enables all to flourish. Governors are highly skilled in their role. They undertake rigorous monitoring of the strategic direction of the vision, keeping it central to their mission. They recognise the fundamental impact that RE and collective worship has on everyone. Leaders, who are always striving to improve, believe that the vision needs to be fresh and innovative. They are aware that ensuring professional development for future Church school leaders, is an important part of this process. The vision is lived out both in school and the community and there is pride in 'Astonising' everyone. Diocesan support is greatly valued. Aston is deeply proud of its vision. It is a net giver, enabling other communities and the schools it works with to also flourish.

A focus on spirituality, using the imagery of 'mirrors, windows and doors,' allows all pupils to articulate their feelings and ideas. Young pupils explain, 'Doors are for looking out, windows are the space to be held and mirrors look at yourself.' Parents deeply appreciate the transformational impact the school has on their family spiritual life. Pupils ask to attend church and lead family prayers at home. There is a sense that their children can reflect deeply, supported by a dedicated, caring and nurturing school.

Collective worship is exceptional. It enables all to flourish. It is the foundation stone of the deeply biblical based practice embedded across the school. It is inclusive, with sign language used to express the vision. God is perceived as God for all, inviting everyone to worship in their own way. An inspirational environment is created using vibrant displays, proudly communicating the vision and its place in the village community. All adults can fully engage with collective worship, as there are resources supporting the vision and values on the website. Worship is enriched through stories and lively music that uplift everyone. Prayer and reflection are an integral part of worship. Pupil engagement in planning and leading worship is very evident. Pupils are encouraged to write prayers. One young pupil prays, 'Dear God you can sit with me', demonstrating the impact of prayer on their growing spirituality. Pupils enjoy worshipping in church when parents and members of the community are invited to attend. Older pupils actively participate by undertaking Bible readings and bell ringing during these services. Year 5 are immensely proud to be an integral part of deciding the school's Christian values each year. When the Year 6 worship team lead collective worship, they teach about their chosen values, such as wisdom. Pupil voice evaluates collective worship, albeit informally. A more formal process to capture their views has started. This extensive involvement in collective worship empowers pupils to express their continuing spiritual growth.


The vision inspires bold and innovative learning experiences. Every pupil is 'a pearl' and can succeed. No pupil is left out of any part of school life. Knowing the barriers to learning for pupils and providing solutions are integral to their personal development, driven by the vision. Displaying work on the 'pegs or patches of pride' enables pupils to celebrate their individual successes with the community. Pupils have many experiences built into the curriculum, such as Forest School, Bikeability training and visits to Duxford Museum and the beach. They feel that Aston prepares them well for secondary school. It helps them to develop to be ready for the wider world. For example, pupils have responsibilities as school councillors. Year 6 are buddies to Reception children in all aspects of school life during their first year. There is a real and natural sense of community and watching over one another throughout the whole school. The house system reinforces this by celebrating that a reward for one is a reward for all. As Aston is a small school, leaders plan for pupils to experience 'life outside the Aston bubble'. For example, they facilitate an inter-village school competition. In addition, there is a week-long residential for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 to develop self-confidence. Pupils demonstrate that they can think for themselves, being resilient and resourceful. Parents know that this school helps their children flourish in so many ways, academically, socially and morally.

The rich and engaging RE curriculum encapsulates the vision. Careful consideration is given to the

enquiry-based approach, balancing Christianity with a range of religions and worldviews. RE is never sacrificed on the timetable, indicating it has a high priority within the curriculum. Older pupils articulate the deeper themes underlying what they study. For example, Moses's interaction with the Egyptian Pharaoh and debating Lady Macbeth's morals affirm cross-curricular learning. The quality of work produced is exemplary. Pupils of different faiths confidently describe their religious beliefs. Pupils are fully accepting of their classmates, respecting their viewpoints and religious traditions. As a result of a local Rabbi's visit, pupils' knowledge of key Jewish beliefs is deepened.

Being part of the Aston school community changes lives. Enabling pupils and adults to become advocates for change is a golden thread throughout the school. Pupils do not perceive what they do is unusual, because it percolates through everything the school does. To them it is strikingly normal. They spontaneously interweave discussing Greta Thunberg and climate change, with learning about life in their link school in Cambodia. Pupils petition to keep jelly on the school menu and they run a mile for a local charity. They successfully argue to not waste real eggs at the Easter egg rolling. Parents and staff affirm the support they receive, as the school always goes the extra mile for them.

Aston's vision and values underpin how pupils behave with respect and dignity, which is role modelled by the adults. Being 'Astonised', is an exceptional quality to have. It guarantees that all pupils are confident in their thinking and intend to plan for a better world.

	<b>The effectiveness of RE is</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	
	RE is exceptional through its inspirational approach. The extremely high quality planning, training and teaching of the curriculum ensures that all pupils can make excellent progress. A range of religions and other worldviews are studied sensitively, enabling all pupils to engage fully. RE is thoughtfully incorporated across the curriculum, ensuring meaningful links are made. In this safe and respectful environment pupils think deeply, coherently discussing their views, allowing all to flourish.		
<b>Information</b>			
<b>School</b>	Aston St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	<b>Inspection date</b>	23 June 2023
<b>URN</b>	117421	<b>VC/VA/Academy</b>	Voluntary Aided
<b>Diocese/District</b>	St Albans	<b>Pupils on roll</b>	127
<b>MAT/Federation</b>	N/A		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Winwood		
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Janet Bird		
<b>Inspector</b>	Sarah Conant	<b>No.</b>	C21/22
<b>QA Assessor</b>	Lizzie McWhirter	<b>No.</b>	244