

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mark's Academy, Merton	
Address	Acacia Road, Mitcham, CR4 1SF
School vision	
<p>We are a community of transformation founded on the inclusive Christian values of love, hope and trust. We are 'transformed by the renewing of our minds' through learning (Romans 12: 12) so that we can flourish in our academic education and in our character development. We celebrate our God-given potential and purpose offering our gifts and talents (Romans 12: 6-8) through service towards one another. We celebrate justice, equality and diversity, so that we can all live 'life in all its fullness' (John 10: 10).</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Mark's Academy transforms lives through its deeply embedded Christian vision, which is understood by all. • The curriculum has been constructed and developed in order to allow all to flourish; it is both inclusive and aspirational for all. • The school's values of love, trust and hope are tangible throughout the school. Everyone comments on the power of the school's Christian vision and its impact on the community. • Collective worship is valued highly by staff and students and shapes each school day . • Members of the community live together well, with strong positive relationships rooted in the school's vision. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the work in religious education (RE) to promote fully consistent assessment. This is so that all pupils can flourish in their learning at all levels. • Develop faith-based leadership opportunities for pupils. This is so that the work of the chaplaincy and links with local churches are enriched. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>St Mark's Academy is a community which transforms lives. Pupils are supported to fulfil their God-given potential through engaging lessons and wide-ranging extra-curricular provision. Leaders have worked with pupils, staff and governors to establish a Christian vision which is deeply cherished. This Christian vision, expressed through the values of love, hope and trust, underpins and shapes every aspect of school life. This includes policy decisions and the day-to-day life of the school. Diversity is celebrated as an expression of the school's Christian vision. Leaders are committed to</p>	

supporting every member of the school to flourish academically and spiritually. This is a community with a strong sense of service to others.

Staff have a relentless drive to enable everyone to succeed academically. They are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Decisions about the curriculum are made based on the school's Christian vision. For example, in English, lessons are designed to ensure pupils feel empowered, with opportunities to write and perform their own poetry. Geography lessons inspire classes with a sense of awe and wonder, developing a commitment to fighting climate change. Provision for sport and creative arts successfully reflects the intention of the vision that all gifts and talents are nurtured. This reflects the determination of school leaders to ensure that they have high aspirations for everyone. Staff and pupils are proud of their academic achievements. Pupils are exceptionally successful in their endeavours because they are known. Across the curriculum, questioning and discussions are used to help pupils to develop curious minds and to listen to their peers.

Pupils, staff and parents understand that love is at the heart of life at St Mark's. Relationships are positive at all levels. This is securely rooted in the school's Christian vision and evident in how people work and flourish together. Pupils appreciate the range of staff who can, and do, help them. Consequently, they feel happy and safe. A restorative approach is taken to build positive relationships where this is needed. Pupils value that they are listened to and respected. They are proud of their contributions to the school. For example, sharing in planning and running a cultural evening successfully celebrating the diversity of their community. Pupils are conscious advocates for change, with a strong awareness of their own power to transform the lives of others. Some are chosen to be 'ambassadors of transformation', acting as role models and student leaders. They understand this as an important way of serving their community. Behaviour is excellent. The atmosphere in school is a balance of calm and lively, which reflects a united commitment to learning and growing together. Parents and carers feel welcomed and valued. They appreciate the inclusive and positive communications they receive from staff.

Staff feel valued and well-supported by school leaders and link this very clearly to the school's Christian vision. There is a strong focus on professional development for all staff. This is palpable in all conversations with staff at all levels. They reflect on their professional practice with weekly coaching sessions in place. This deeply collaborative approach has built a staff team united in their passion for being the best they can be. This has a transformational effect on the lives of their pupils. St Mark's is a member of Anthem Academy Trust. This has given the school both support and autonomy, enabling it to live its vision fully. Staff at the trust understand fully the impact of the school's Christian vision and their role in supporting school leaders in living this vision in all that they do. Likewise, governors give clear and careful support and challenge to leaders, with effective monitoring and evaluation. They are wholly committed to serving pupils by ensuring that the school is the best it can be. The impact of the vision is further supported through strong links with Southwark Diocese Board of Education.

Collective worship is at the heart of the spiritual life of the school. Senior leaders and governors provide strong support for the chaplain in his work. Pupils and staff value the space and time given at the start of the day dedicated to spiritual development. This includes regular reflection on biblical teaching. They talk about how collective worship helps them to live out the school's values of love, hope and trust. Collective worship at St Mark's is clearly understood as helping all members of the community to flourish. There are opportunities for developing stronger links with local churches, to broaden the experience of worship for all pupils. The chaplain works extremely well with colleagues, supporting the excellent pastoral care in place for all pupils. Informed by the vision, leaders have established inclusive and engaging provision for young people with refugee status.

RE is a flagship department within the school. The subject has a high profile and pupils understand and respect the excellent provision in these lessons. The RE curriculum is thoughtfully planned and sequenced at all key stages. Staff ensure that pupils can engage with biblical texts in ways which are meaningful, accessible and challenging. Leaders ensure that RE meets the expectations of the Church of England, with all pupils taking GCSE RE. Lessons are inspirational and engaging; pupils

participate with enthusiasm and are proud of the progress they make. Feedback is constructive and pupils know how to improve. There are, however, opportunities to develop and embed the use of assessment and its impact on progress.

St Mark's is a community which is connected, inclusive and joyful. Parents value the many ways in which they see their children flourish through their time at the school. Staff and pupils live the school's Christian vision through the value of love, hope and trust each and every day.

The inspection findings indicate that St Mark's Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	15 January 2024 - 16 January 2024	URN	134003
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	919
Diocese	Southwark		
MAT/Federation	Anthem Trust		
Principal	Hannah Fahey		
Chair	Rachell Norman		
Inspector	Elisabeth Stevenson	No.	942