



Minutes of the Christian Distinctiveness Working Group

Held on Thursday 5th February 2026

Present:

Reverend Phillipa Maddox (Vicar)

Michelle Lay (Spirituality leader)

Verity Edey (Headteacher)

Michelle Moss (Deputy Head)

Laura Markiewicz (Courageous Advocacy/Global Neighbours Leader)

Parents invited to attend (None attended)

Stuart Moore (Foundation Governor)

Ben Hodson (Chair of Governors)

Meeting opened at 9.20am following CDWP committee member's attendance in worship, led by Reverend Philipa

Actions are highlighted in green

1. Apologies

2. Minutes from previous meeting

- Minutes approved and on website

3. Actions carried forwards from the previous meeting- Actions met

4. A review of actions against SIAMS inspection targets

- Refine current systems for monitoring the impact of the Christian vision, so that their findings explicitly inform the strategic direction for St Mary's as a Church school.
- A Teams channel continues to be in place so that everything is now in one place to support more effective monitoring and gathering of evidence towards SIAMS strands and SIAMS targets so that the school can identify and focus on next steps. This was shown to CDWP members.
- Expand pupils' age-appropriate understanding of injustice in the world around them. This is so that they begin to see wider opportunities to make a difference. (See IQ5 enquiry in agenda item 5 for an update on this area.)

- C.) Continue to develop the RE curriculum through a further focus on key skills. This is for pupils to have a richer and deeper experience of the subject.
- Changes to RE in terms of a 'world view' were shared and this will be a focus of the next CDWP.

5. CDWP Spotlight SIAMS strand questions:

- **IQ2 – Key question: How is spiritual development an intrinsic part of the curriculum?**
- The new spiritual leader has had spirituality training with the Diocese and headteacher
- Spiritual areas and reflection areas were discussed as an important part of our pupils' day.
- It was agreed that the worship lead, spiritual lead and music lead will ensure spirituality is woven through worships and the St Mary's worship procedures will be shared with new staff.
- The spiritual leader is already preparing for spring and how our spiritual garden will be used.
- The spiritual diet for all children was discussed. It was requested by the CDWP that the full curriculum for spirituality is included within the spirituality policy to be really clear to all staff and parents.
- The spirituality triangle has been shared with all staff and the spirituality leader is going to check that all staff and new staff since September really understand the school's meaning of spirituality and what this looks like in practice.
- The leader will explore the spiritual diet that children on flexi school/part timetables and those not able to participate in whole school worship are receiving.
- **IQ5 – Key question: b) How does the culture of the school encourage justice and courageous advocacy, enabling pupils to make ethical choices and to be agents of change? The CDWP met with agents of change who shared their ambition to run a great clothes swap the day after this meeting. They had an excellent understanding of issues around palm oil and are going to be investigating where chocolate with palm oil is displayed in our local Tesco.**
- New allotment has been built to provide for the community
- Enrichment afternoon half term focus planned around courageous advocacy
- Courageous advocates are committed to making changes for the better and were articulate in their understanding of changes needed around the use of palm oil in chocolate. Children are clearly enjoying their roles as courageous advocates.
- There is a school in Gambia who is going to link with the school on a mutual project tbc and leader is going to make contact.

- Working towards silver award documentation with our expected completion date of May 2026, with a view to then applying for gold by the end of summer 2027.
- The leader of this area will contact Christian Aid to check our future palm oil project will help us to gain our silver award.
- **IQ4 - How does the theologically rooted Christian vision enable all to live well together in an inclusive, dignifying, and equitable culture?**
- The pupil parliament leader took members of the CDWP, led by children, to their newly created library. Children voted on the categories for texts that they wanted in the library and have labelled areas themselves.
- Pupil parliament have also coordinated voting around the songs to play children in and out of celebration assembly each week. They created a list of rules, no bad words, upbeat and fun.
- Pupil parliament have requested and achieved approved funds from Miss Edey for new books for their library.
- Demand for visiting the library is growing and more and more pupils are choosing to go here at lunchtimes, to hear stories and choose books.
- Some questions were asked by CDWP members. The pupil parliament lead confirmed that all children receive Dojo points. Once children achieve 100 points, they get a special Rosette from Miss Edey for modelling school valued and learning behaviours. - The CDWP also asked how pupils from vulnerable groups access enrichment on Thursday afternoons. Some children have bespoke PE am, some have bespoke PE pm and this is by specialists, funded by the school and premiere ed through match funding. We also match fund music opportunities through Irock. 83% of pupil premium children access clubs. The 17% that don't have specific reasons as to why clubs can't be accessed.
- CDWP asked how we promote clubs to new parents. We share our offer with parents on open days. We will also look at promoting this more on our new website.
- CDWP questioned how we link with other churches. Office to communicate our events

6. Agreement of further exploration of IQ2, 5 and 4 in the next meeting.

IQ2:

- How is school developing a shared understanding from staff, parents and pupils around spirituality?
- How does worship develop everyone's spiritual offer?
- How is the spiritual garden impacting on children's spiritual development. How and when is it used and can it be open full time?

IQ5:

- Agents of change to share the changes and impact they have made.
- Evidence of submission for the silver award
- Articulate understanding around courageous advocacy from staff and pupils

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IQ4:

- Evidence of how pupil parliament and courageous advocates make linked choices
- How pupils with SEND and vulnerabilities are included within the worship and spiritual offer.
- How the library is evolving with pupils

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7. Other Updates:

Stain Glass Window project – We are hoping to achieve this by the end of the academic year.

- 12 frames depicting the big story of the Bible
- 1. Title
- 2. Creation
- 3. People of God – Noah’s Ark
- 4. Moses – People of God (represents women also)
- 5. Johan and the Whale (School Vision)
- 6. Incarnation – Nativity scene
- 7. Gospel – Friends fishing – links to the sea
- 8. Gospel – Feeding the 5000
- 9. Gospel – Jesus and children
- 10. Salvation and Resurrection – cross and tomb
- 11 Ascension
- 12 Kingdom of God – St Mary’s Infants

Head is going to the Canterbury Cathedral 3 day retreat which has been funded by the Diocese.

8. AOB

- Today’s worship was discussed. SENCO, worship leader, head and spirituality lead will meet next week to fine tune worship planning and procedures.
- Reverend Philipa suggested that in this year’s Nativity a blessing is included.
- RE and worship policy to be checked as there is new guidance around withdrawal from worship.

9. Next meeting: Termly meeting will take place on 21st May 9.20am

10. Focus of the next meeting:

- IQ follow ups

- Continue to develop the RE curriculum through a further focus on key skills in line with the 3rd SIAMS inspection target. This is for pupils to have a richer and deeper experience of the subject.