

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bickleigh Down CofE Primary

Address School Drive, Woolwell, Plymouth, United Kingdom, PL6 7JW

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

Excellent

The impact of collective worship

Excellent

The effectiveness of religious education (RE)

Excellent

School's vision

'Spurring each other on with love.' Our strong Christian vision based on Hebrews 10:24 'and let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds' ensures that every child has the opportunity to be the best that they can be. Just like the Hebrews needed encouragement from the writer to spur each other on to be more Christlike in their actions, we recognise that children and staff thrive in a supportive and caring environment where all are spurred on to be the best that they can be.

Key findings

- The distinctive Christian vision is completely embedded in the life of the school. It nurtures a rich culture where all have high aspirations and talk about being the best they can be. Pupils develop excellent relationships and show a high level of care and respect for one another.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum is ambitious, innovative and exciting which leads pupils to make exceptional progress. They are challenged by ideas raised and show a depth of maturity in their responses. The subject leader brings outstanding expertise, widely sharing the highest quality practice.
- Collective worship is the 'heartbeat' of the school, it is invitational and clearly inspirational. It plays a fundamental role in shaping pupils' character and actions, showing what the vision looks like in daily life. Pupils make influential contributions to worship and talk enthusiastically about its contribution to their thinking.
- Pupils talk with clarity about their own highly developed understanding of spirituality. This nurtures a culture where they pose their own questions and have a reflective approach to life. Pupils of all ages are prompted to become agents for change, which is seen as a natural part of school life.
- Leaders are passionate about their church school, consistently seeking to improve. They empower pupils to develop their leadership responsibilities and flourish, playing a significant role in evaluations and improvements. However, few staff go on to take up leadership roles in other church schools.

Areas for development

- Inspire church school leaders of the future by providing increased opportunities to grow their leadership talents both in this school and beyond.
- Enable pupils as agents of change in caring for God's world, to develop a more in-depth understanding of the exploitation of the natural world, so they can raise awareness of this for others.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The school's distinctive Christian vision is fundamental to daily life, permeating and shaping all aspects of this outstanding learning school. Leaders articulate an extensive understanding of the theological principles underpinning the vision. They see everyone as being wonderfully made in God's image. Each person has different gifts, which the school sees as its responsibility to grow for the benefit of the school family and beyond, as global citizens. Pupils explain that the quotation in the letter to the Hebrews, encourages the readers to live in a Christ like way. They see how this spurred them on. Pupils, irrespective of any religious faith, talk about using Christian values and how this shapes their caring community. This creates a harmonious environment where all fulfil their potential. Leaders are inspired by the vision to develop the best church school they can be and make bold decisions. For instance, there is a distinct focus on the early identification of pupils' needs and through research finding the best strategies to help all flourish. A dedicated staff team live out this vision, demonstrating the difference it makes. Staff feel valued, growing their talents, taking further responsibilities. However, few go on to take on leadership roles in other church schools. Pupils make an excellent contribution to monitoring. The 'spirit detectives' work with peers evaluating all aspects of church school life, consistently presenting improvement suggestions to governors. This identified that pupils did not fully understand the theology underpinning the vision. Regular vision days now deepen pupils' awareness. Governors and staff continuously evaluate and refine approaches, increasing the impact of the vision.

Pupils enjoy and are challenged by RE, fully appreciating its importance for their thinking. This is because the subject leader introduces such innovative approaches. As chair of the National Association of Teachers of RE she is at the forefront of new developments. She has creatively woven ideas into a unique, ambitious and exciting curriculum. RE takes on a religions and world view approach. Pupils demonstrate an outstanding knowledge of religious concepts and vocabulary. They confidently articulate their ideas, particularly when responding to questions of meaning and purpose. There are extensive opportunities to expand their understanding of theological and philosophical ideas. Approaches from this curriculum inform developments in other subjects. Pupils talk in considerable depth about world faiths and viewpoints, including humanism. Pupils' progress is expertly tracked using impressive, robust assessment strategies. This enables teachers to know and plan the precise steps in each pupils' learning, accelerating progress. Assessments are moderated with other church schools. This high-quality practice is shared nationally, through publications and shaping ongoing research. In addition to locally leading the RE hub, she contributes to initial teacher training and supports numerous schools. At the request of the diocese, she is leading training in RE and collective worship.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about worship, they welcome the opportunity to come together. They fully recognise how it shapes their thinking and actions. Planning is meticulous, it progressively deepens pupils' understanding of the vision through exploring Christian values. Worship plays a major role in shaping pupils' character. New initiatives such as key stage and class worship, provide experiences closely linked to pupils' ages. These enable pupils to share ideas, allowing them to disagree well. 'Spirit detectives' continuously review worship, for instance, reporting back to class teachers on reflection spaces and how they can be improved. In addition, the introduction of specific worship leaders gives pupils greater ownership in this area. They write prayers on the theme being developed by the end of each act of worship. Pupils of all ages plan and lead worship, notably when raising awareness of a cause for which they are passionate. They thoroughly enjoy singing, which is infectious with songs specially written to deepen their understanding of a Christian value. Pupils have a very well-developed understanding of prayer, using different types to express thoughts,


which are valued. They fully understand the significance of the Eucharist and its importance for Christians. The excellent practice of the worship leader is shared throughout the diocese and with all Devon primary schools.

Pupils are immersed in an exceptional culture where high aspirations are part of everyday life. They thrive, growing in confidence. Using the latest research, leaders create a unique ambitious curriculum around the vision which impressively meets pupils' diverse needs. Pupils use the language of being the best they can be. The strong support for vulnerable pupils stands out. Pupils develop an impressive level of resilience which helps when learning is challenging. They have an extremely well-developed understanding of deprivation through studying, for example, schools in Nepal. However, pupils' awareness of the exploitation of the natural world could be enhanced. Pupils explain that spirituality is 'what makes me, me.' They have a deep appreciation of who they are and what they can do. Regular opportunities extend their thinking in a variety of areas through challenging questions where they express ideas imaginatively in art or drama. Reflection is very important and valued, helping pupils with learning. Pupils use approaches from spirituality to respond to curriculum experiences, becoming agents for change. This is a natural part of school life. Bringing hope through pupils sending cards to COVID patients in hospital is an example of this in action.

The vision of spurring others on informs partnerships. Subject leaders share excellent practice across local hub schools. The church supports through governance and leading worship which enriches pupils' understanding of key Christian festivals. Pupils have opportunities to discuss world faiths and viewpoints and how these influence them, for example working with visitors from the Plymouth Centre for Faith and Cultural Diversity. They demonstrate a depth of understanding of difference and diversity far beyond their age. This allows pupils to celebrate diversity, recognising its importance.

The understanding that each individual is important, because they are wonderfully made, comes from the vision. Pupils treat one another with a high degree of respect and there is a tangible sense of being a caring community. They take pride in their community, thriving in their leadership responsibilities.

The school's care for the community, especially during the pandemic, is notable. Online learning and worship with intensive support for families, where appropriate, led to all feeling important. The pastoral team's nurture continues to make a fundamental impact for many families. Pupils effectively use strategies which help them to be calm. They have put in place by the pro-active and qualified mental health team.

	The effectiveness of RE is	Excellent
	<p>The standard of pupils' work is exceptional. By the time pupils leave the school it is consistently well above expectations. Their work shows a depth of maturity and insight where pupils are posing their own questions and exploring answers. Excellent tracking and support mean that few pupils are achieving below age-related levels. Teaching is consistently inspiring with well-focused challenge for all. Pupils use ideas and approaches in RE very effectively in other subject areas.</p>	

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	22 June 2022	URN	113493
Date of previous inspection	01 May 2015		
School status	VA	NOR	413
Name of Multi Academy Trust or Federation			
Diocese or Methodist Circuit	Exeter		
Headteacher	Tameka Hue Hamilton		
Proportion of pupils deemed to be disadvantaged	Below National Average		
Proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Below National Average		

Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	David Hatrey	No.	0844