

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

## The Blue School

Address Kennion Road, Wells BA5 2NR

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**

**Good**

### School's vision

Working together, we enable all students and staff to flourish in academic work, enriching our lives, building a shared ethos; and developing our own moral code.

'Be ready to do good. To speak no evil about anyone, to live in peace and to be gentle and polite to all people'.  
Titus 3:2

### Key findings

- School leaders at all levels are highly ambitious in their shared vision for the school and ensure that all pupils flourish. The vision permeates all aspects of school life. Staff live out this vision through their relentless desire to support and care for their pupils, enriching their lives.
- The exceptional pastoral support for both pupils and staff has meant that all members of the school community feel highly valued and cared for. Leaders have been hugely innovative and creative in how they have addressed the needs of all individuals.
- The school's emphasis on being outward facing is particularly strong, aided by its status as a research school and the Somerset partnership. The vision drives this as staff are able to develop professionally, giving pupils rich and varied opportunities.
- Collective worship is inclusive and invitational. Pupils value the opportunities for spiritual development in their daily acts of reflection and engage well in this time. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate worship.
- The highly experienced religious education (RE) team ensure that it is very well planned, led and taught. Pupils speak very highly of their enjoyment for the subject and the opportunities to explore questions of meaning.

### Areas for development

- To enhance the role of pupils in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship so as to develop their spiritual understanding further.
- To explore the opportunities within the Somerset partnership to share provision including the chaplaincy for the mutual benefit of all partners.

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 Blue School is proud of its longstanding history and its distinctively Christian vision permeates all aspects of the school community. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher promotes mutual trust and cohesion across the community with staff and pupils at all levels feeling valued and cared for. This is a Church school for its community and at the heart of this vision are the shared values of respect, empathy and politeness rooted in Christian theology. Governance is a real strength and monitoring is robust with governors articulating the shared vision with passion.

The Christian vision drives leaders in the pursuit of excellence through a commitment to teaching and learning and a truly ambitious curriculum. This is an outward facing school which values strong partnerships and innovation. Leaders are proactive in seeking to develop partnerships further. The highly valued research school status embodies the vision to strive for high quality teaching and exceptional professional development. School leaders are sensitive to the needs of their pupils and make purposeful decisions about the curriculum which enable all pupils to flourish both academically and through the wider opportunities for enrichment. Staff at all levels feel greatly valued and speak highly of the opportunities that they have for career and personal development. The high-impact contribution of the work of the research school and the coaching programme has created a culture where staff model best practice and fully support one another with compassion.

Pastoral care for pupils is inspirational and anchored by the school vision. Staff care deeply for their pupils. This inclusive school celebrates the uniqueness and inherent value in everyone. The strong relationships between staff and pupils are exemplary and pupils describe feeling cared for and listened to. Pupils are respectful of one another and the Praise system and behaviour policy strongly promote a culture of dignity and respect. The highly capable pastoral team are relentless in their drive to support their pupils and this is profoundly evident in how they have overcome the challenges of the pandemic. The impressive range of support and intervention available to pupils is carefully tailored to their needs and staff know their pupils exceptionally well. Leaders have skillfully addressed the need for greater mental health provision with an in-house school counselling service. Leaders make bold decisions about provision which are transformative for the pupils in their care.

The vision has had a significant impact on the school's commitment and determination to ensure that enrichment opportunities for pupils return to their pre-pandemic levels. This has been highly successful with a wide range of clubs and trips open to pupils. Pupils speak with excitement about the school drama productions and the upcoming French trip and Year 7 camp. The high variety of opportunities outside the classroom are varied to enable pupils to fully engage and flourish. Well-established clubs and groups such as The Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, kaleidoscope club, forest school and eco-club all offer pupils highly beneficial and influential experiences. Pupils feel empowered to address issues they feel strongly about. This is illustrated through the hopeful and aspirational work of the eco-club and by those pupils engaged in fundraising for charity. Personal, social, health education (PSHE) features strongly as part of the curriculum and fully supports pupils to learn about healthy relationships and to embrace difference and cherish their own uniqueness. The richness of the wider curriculum enables pupils to develop spiritually and they engage with curiosity and enjoyment.

Leaders take courageous decisions about the delivery of worship which reflect its centrality to the school's vision. Collective worship delivered through daily acts of Christian reflection deepen pupils' spirituality. The chaplain has been instrumental and highly effective in the establishment of an engaging programme of collective worship which is greatly valued by the school community. The school prayer encapsulates the Christian vision and is a pivotal part of collective worship. However, at present pupils have limited opportunity to play a central role in the planning and delivery of collective worship and therefore, this is an area for future development. The highly visible pastoral support provided by the chaplain is truly inspirational and all-encompassing of the vision. Pupils and staff speak of how the Christian ethos and chaplain have given them comfort and strength in challenging times. Strong relationships with St Cuthbert's Church and Wells Cathedral successfully enhance the opportunities for pupils to develop an appreciation of varied liturgical traditions. Pupils are welcomed and celebrated at the Year 7 foundation day at St Cuthbert's Church. This strong sense of belonging lies at the heart of the school and pupils talk proudly of planting of a tree in the school orchard to mark the beginning of their school journey.

Leadership in the RE department is highly effective and the subject is valued by both pupils and leaders. The physical location of the RE department is at the centre of the school which reflects the importance placed upon the subject. The highly skilled team of specialists within the department utilise their broad expertise to create a curriculum which is both challenging and engaging. Pupils enjoy studying both Christianity and Buddhism at GCSE in greater depth. Pupils at all ages speak enthusiastically about the opportunity to explore philosophical questions about life and they describe RE lessons as a safe space to voice their beliefs and ideas. Assessment and the tracking of progress in the department is highly effective and the RE lead has clear processes in place for this. There is a strong uptake of pupils studying A-level RE and pupils in the sixth-form talk about how the subject has broadened and deepened their thinking about ultimate questions.

The Blue school is a truly transformational community which values the inherent value in all of its members. The school is outward facing and ambitious to create a community in which all of its members treat one another with respect, empathy and politeness. This vision is deeply rooted in Christian values and pupils are well prepared for their life journey beyond the school.

### Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	28 June 2022	URN	137285
Date of previous inspection	7 July 2015		
School status	Voluntary Controlled	NOR	1501
Name of MAT/Federation	Single academy trust		
Diocese / Methodist District	Bath and Wells		
Headteacher	Mark Woodlock		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Rachel Croft	No.	C1903