

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sexey's CofE (VA) Secondary School

Address Cole Road, Bruton, Somerset, United Kingdom, BA10 0DF

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

Good

The impact of collective worship

Good

The effectiveness of religious education (RE)

Good

School's vision

Our vision is based on 'The Good Samaritan'. Luke 10: 25-37. We have seven core Christian values derived from the story. These are the building blocks of our individual character and through these we grow and develop as individuals and as a community. They assist students and adults to find 'Life in all its fullness.' (John 10:10)

Key findings

- The vision and associated values are inspiring individuals and a community to live out their learning from the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The core meaning of the vision is not communicated clearly.
- Pupils of all abilities make strong progress strongly in their learning and in their spiritual development as a result of the impact of the vision.
- The wellbeing of both pupils and adults is demonstrably prioritised due to the vision's emphasis on 'fullness of life' (John 10).
- Collective worship invites pupils and adults to reflect deeply on the vision and inspires them to take action. Pupil leadership is not yet extended into the monitoring and planning of collective worship.
- Pupils throughout the school respond thoughtfully and enthusiastically in religious education (RE) and make good progress in their learning.

Areas for development

- Leaders are to ensure that the core meaning of the vision is articulated more clearly so that the school community is further inspired by it.
- Extend the social action of pupils into the local community to develop further their practical commitment to justice.
- Expand pupil leadership roles to include worship responsibilities to inform better the monitoring, planning and leadership of collective worship.

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

Sexey's School's vision is inspiring a cohesive community in which pupils and adults are at ease yet also challenged to be the best they can be. The vision is based on learning from Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10). 'Go and do likewise' (v37) is Jesus' challenge at the end of the parable. This is tellingly translated into seven associated values derived from the actions of the Samaritan. Pupils and adults at Sexey's flourish by living out these values. The connection with the 'fullness of life' envisaged by Jesus (John 10 v10) and which is also part of the vision is not so clear. Leaders are to articulate and communicate this connection more clearly and so help the school develop as a Church school. The vision is not depicted visually across the school, which means its importance to the community is not highlighted.

Pupils and adults know and practise the core values of kindness, forgiveness, courage, empathy, respect and resilience across the school. Collective worship helps pupils to link the values to Bible stories and teachings. It offers them space to reflect on the values and challenges them appropriately to put the values into action. Staff talk naturally about the values in lessons and much work has been done to identify and teach the application of the values across the curriculum. Pupils and staff recognise the values as highly relevant to living a good life beyond the classroom. They are, importantly, both Christian values and values for life.

Leaders have sought out a partner trust to sustain its progress as a Church school. The Quantock Education Trust has provided leadership and affords opportunities for staff to share their expertise. The RE leader, for instance, has supported another secondary school with curriculum design. The trust and the school deeply appreciate the training from Bath and Wells Diocese that helps their understanding of Church school issues.

Leaders shape curriculum and assessment to bring out the best in all pupils. They believe strongly that all can achieve well, that all can attain 'fullness of life'. They prioritise, for example, formative feedback meaning pupils are actively engaged in their own progress. Pupils with additional learning needs and/or disability thrive through deep analysis of their needs and early interventions. The innovative reading programme throughout the school adds to community development as it deepens cultural knowledge and provides role modelling. Intentional moments of reflection throughout the curriculum contribute to pupils identifying how their spiritual development matters.

The application of the Parable of the Good Samaritan is seen clearly in pupils aspiring to be the best they can be. This is both in their learning and in their character. The associated values give them a framework and a common language to do this. Interactions between pupils and adults are very harmonious and on the rare occasions when things go wrong, the emphasis on forgiveness and restoration leads to quick resolution. The vision has a direct impact on the behaviour policy. Rewards are based on demonstrating the school's values. Pupils and adults nominate each other and receive one or more values badges. All wear these proudly and are good reminders of how to take steps towards fulfilling the vision.


Although the term courageous advocacy is not well known, it is certainly practised at Sexey's. Pupil leaders have a large say over which charities to support and speak persuasively about the injustices that lie behind the causes. There are already links into the local community but the social action of pupils there is less developed.

A notable feature of the school is that there is a significant number of boarders. Many boarders are from countries around the world. This means that diversity is experienced in a significant way. Many of the boarders have Christian beliefs and share these and their practices readily in lessons. Thus, many pupils have a real insight into Christianity as a global religion.

Leaders prioritise the wellbeing of the whole community. This is due to their commitment to the 'fullness of life' in the vision. Pupils, staff and parents attest to wellbeing as a demonstrable feature of the school. The pastoral support in the school is skilled, swift to respond and centred on the welfare of the whole person. The chaplain offers well received pastoral and spiritual support. Pupils value their prayerful presence. Adults appreciate the attention to their wellbeing, particularly valuing the headteacher's open door policy.

The impact of the vision is evident through a tangible sense of unity and purpose in the school. This is reinforced by collective worship that welcomes all pupils and invites them to reflect on their character and spiritual development. The whole school gathers together weekly and daily collective worship is offered in smaller and larger groups. Pupils speak of the relevance of the worship to them. Prayer and reflection are especially valued as moments away from the rush of everyday life. The Bible is central and pupils show good awareness of the context and application of a large range of biblical passages. The boarders regularly attend the parish church and appreciate the opportunity to participate in the Eucharist there. Pupils enjoy other pupils leading collective worship as they tend to communicate their passions. There is not a system to do this regularly. Pupils have well formed views. Planning is underway to involve them more in monitoring and in agreeing a common structure for all acts of worship.

The hard working and passionate RE team has good systems to track and challenge pupil progress. These, in turn, enable the creation of effective and ambitious curriculum units. A wide variety of religions and worldviews are studied through the lens of theology, philosophy and human sciences. Leaders ensure that there are groups for GCSE and A level examinations. Alongside, there is good RE provision for all other pupils that fosters deeper understanding and debate. Pupils appreciate the safe space in lessons to form and articulate their views. Pupils say that sometimes they want to spend more time over set tasks or to respond more creatively but they understand that there are timetable restrictions. Good practice is shared within the school and with other schools through involvement with local, national and regional groups. The school leader for RE has regular opportunities to share new ideas and pedagogy, ensuring that all staff teaching RE do so with confidence and to a high standard.

	The effectiveness of RE is	Good
	<p>There is a strong team approach to planning within the RE department. The curriculum is relevant to pupils and reflects current developments in RE. Pupils throughout the school respond well as they value RE and enjoy deepening their understanding. Teaching and learning is consistently good, as evidenced through book scrutiny and discussions with pupils. Pupils learn and progress well, especially in the examination classes. This includes pupils with additional learning needs and the most able.</p>	

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	04 & 05 October 2022	URN	137313
Date of previous inspection	09 & 10 March 2015		
School status	VA	NOR	650
Name of Multi Academy Trust or Federation	Quantock Education Trust		
Diocese or Methodist Circuit	Bath & Wells		
Headteacher	Helen Cullen		
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)	<p>Approximately 20% of the pupils are boarders. The school joined Quantock Education Trust in October 2021</p>		
Inspector's name	Simon Stevens	No.	0953