

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

<b>Much Birch Church of England Primary School</b>	
Address	Much Birch, Hereford, HR2 8HL
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	Excellent

School's vision
<p>All members of our community are able to realise their God-given potential and flourish through hope and high aspirations. We facilitate equality, compassion and active citizenship whilst upholding Christian values. We treat others, as we would like to be treated, with love, dignity and respect.</p> <p>'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.' John 15:5</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Christian vision permeates the life of the school. Pupils and adults flourish both personally and academically, through sustained reference to school's values.</li> <li>• Leaders strong focus on community enhances pupils' respect for the wider world around them. However, opportunities are missed to effectively utilise wider educational partnerships to further enhance the school provision.</li> <li>• Rich learning opportunities effectively foster pupils' spiritual development. Resilience and perseverance are successfully promoted, combined with a strong moral compass.</li> <li>• Effective religious education (RE) is prioritised to ensure pupils have an impressive understanding of Christianity. However, pupils' knowledge of other faiths and worldviews is underdeveloped.</li> <li>• Collective worship is a highly valued time for reflection and prayer. The strong school vision and values are at the heart of school life, resulting in pupils' positive character and actions.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster and embed strong education partnerships, resulting in mutually beneficial school developments and overall improvement.</li> <li>• Develop routine monitoring and evaluation by leaders at all levels, to inform future school improvement.</li> <li>• Ensure pupil's are well prepared for life as global citizens by increasing their cultural diversity awareness with rich learning experiences.</li> </ul>

### Inspection findings

The deeply embedded Christian vision is embodied in the school's tag-line 'All will flourish and reach their God-given potential'. Leaders give careful thought to the needs of pupils in the context of their catchment area. Consequently, the selected values of hope, humility, perseverance and friendship, have relevance and impact in supporting pupils to thrive. Since there is a consistent and shared understanding, pupils grow in wisdom, knowledge and skills. Leaders ensure that key drivers of possibility, diversity, community and communication cohesively permeate every level of school life. The Christian vision gives school development planning an aspirational focus. However, systematic routine evaluation does not routinely lead into school improvement to enable leaders, at all levels, to flourish. Leaders are totally committed to everyone achieving their God-given potential and are positive role models to pupils and staff. As a result, the school is a happy, safe place to work and learn. All staff passionately hold the view that each child is special, each with their own needs. Therefore, the school is inclusive in nature and the vulnerable are well supported. Careful monitoring ensures that all pupils are able to access extra-curricular opportunities.

School leaders, supported by parents and the community, strategically invest in the exciting, high quality, forest school provision. Pupils access learning through a broad range of learning styles in stimulating and well-resourced grounds. This effective planning results in the growth of skill sets and additional spiritual development opportunities. Pupils work with perseverance. For example, they show great determination, outside on a cold, damp day, using tools to make weaving looms from branches. Leaders have outlined their school's bespoke definition of spirituality so that it is given a distinct prominence. For this reason, there are now numerous planned moments within curriculum provision to reflect, especially in the outdoor environment. Pupils excitedly express awe and wonder at how bees make hexagons in their hives. This is complemented by the feelings of peacefulness they express at being in nature.

The vision to 'treat others, as we would like to be treated' results in a genuine sense of concern for the wellbeing of others. Staff and parents speak of the encouraging support they have received in times of personal challenge. Parents comment that the school does so much more than educate the children. Pupils show strong community awareness, exemplified through the vast array of charitable causes supported. One example is the all year-round reverse advent calendar supporting local food banks. Pupils recognise that their compassion for the wider community gives others dignity and respect. Since the vision to uphold Christian values is so widely celebrated, they are remarkably keen to encourage each other. Pupils take the initiative in their leadership roles. They instigated a team of 'kindness monitors', which has led to noticeably calm and caring playtimes. If pupils do have any concerns, then allocated staff follow up the worry box messages in a timely manner. Governors intentionally invest in these roles to minimise the barriers which prevent pupils from succeeding. Staff champion their care for the whole child, as well as recognising that happy children can access their learning more successfully.

Collective worship is an inspirational part of the day and highly valued by all. Pupils singing is joyful and energetic and so this shared time together is uplifting. Pupils are challenged effectively to think of ways bible stories can be applied to everyday life situations. Leaders plan worship meticulously, ensuring that the school's values are consistently and intrinsically threaded throughout the school community. Various members of staff and clergy take a lead, broadening the range of pupils' experiences. The local vicar offers valuable, regular support. Pupils engage well and inspire others with their own thoughtful prayers and drama participation. Pupils' evaluations of worship positively impact school practice. They are

effectively involved in a range of leadership roles and are able to take a greater responsibility in planning and leading. They appreciate the multiple times they can pray collectively and personally throughout the day. Pupils rightly say that it helps them be thankful for what they have. Parents are invited to participate in school collective worship regularly and also value the on-line resources provided. They describe how this aspect of school life has a positive impact on their children, who come home singing Christian songs and asking searching questions about God.

RE has a prominent place within the curriculum. Teachers' on-going, frequent assessment of key 'sticky' facts ensures effective progress in knowledge of increasingly challenging content. Even young pupils can explain theological terms, such as incarnation. Pupils speak confidently about a range of world faiths. However, they have less opportunity to explore cultures beyond their local community to prepare them more fully for life as a global citizen. Leaders devise 'big questions' and exploit carefully considered relevant resources. Consequently, pupils develop resilience and are prepared for challenge. They are confident in articulating their opinions and treat the views of others with respect. Leaders are passionate about developing opportunities for pupils to become courageous advocates. As a result, pupils fervently describe how each person has an inner moral compass, which moulds their actions. They are confident in making decisions which support other people and address ethical dilemmas.

The school's attentiveness to the Christian vision for pupils to achieve their God-given potential is clear. Governors are committed to recruiting and supporting a highly committed staff team to sustain the school's Christian foundation. This has empowered leaders to collaborate in a federation partnership, supporting the Christian vision for children to thrive more widely. However, further mutually beneficial partnerships to enrich positive learning experiences are underdeveloped.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the significance of Christian values. Their behaviour is exemplary and they strive to do their best in the school's motivational and aspirational learning environment. Consequently, pupils at Much Birch school are keen and flourish.

Information			
School	Much Birch Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	29 November 2022
URN	116833	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Hereford	Pupils on roll	178
Executive Headteacher	Bernadette Davies		
Chair of Governors	Revd Mark Johnson		
Inspector	Jan Potter	No.	939