

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

Frome St John's Church of England VA First School	
Address	Christchurch Street East, Frome, BA11 1QG
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
<p>'Together, we give our children the roots to grow and wings to fly.'</p> <p>Our vision is based around the elements of the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13: 1-23. For seeds to grow, they need firm and strong roots. Like birds who nest in trees, the St John's community aim to nurture their young, who then go on to fly out into the world and flourish.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A distinctive Christian vision is clearly lived by the whole school community. This is evident in the shaping of the curriculum and in pastoral care ensuring the flourishing of pupils and adults alike.</li> <li>• Leadership and governance is enthusiastic and committed to ensuring the impact of the vision. However, current new governors have limited understanding of strategic development as a church school.</li> <li>• Collective worship is well planned and organised, both expressing and supporting the vision. This has clear impact on the pupils, but they have limited opportunities to be involved in planning and leadership.</li> <li>• The vision drives a clear definition of spirituality, and this is evident in pupils' understanding of religion and worldviews. However, rich opportunities for spiritual development in all subject areas are not formally identified.</li> <li>• Religious education (RE) is strong and has significant effect in delivering the vision to pupils. They speak readily and confidently about their learning and the impact of the subject on their lives.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange the church school distinctiveness training and support required for many new governors. This is essential for a church school under new leadership to ensure rapid strategic development .</li> <li>• Formally identify rich opportunities for promoting spiritual development in all subject areas. This is in order to show pupils that spirituality pervades all areas of life.</li> <li>• Develop greater pupil involvement in planning and leading collective worship to strengthen engagement with this activity and enhance its impact.</li> </ul>



## Inspection findings

A committed interim headteacher, acting deputy, and a small group of governors enthusiastically promote a distinctive Christian vision supported by biblical teaching. The vision gives pupils 'roots to grow and wings to fly'. It has an immediately positive impact on all their relationships. They understand this is derived from the Bible, and is a possible guide for living. The school has a strong sense of community driven by the vision. This ensures the flourishing of pupils and adults who describe being in school as 'like receiving a big hug'. There are supportive partnerships between the school, parents, and the church. Pupils relate their activities to the vision and values speaking confidently about the impact on their lives. The school is in the Frome Learning Partnership with others in the area. This provides mutual support in spiritual, academic, and practical matters and sustains and encourages the school leadership. The school lacks governors, but foundation governors monitor the school vision's impact. Visit reports on this are considered at meetings driving future improvement. New governors have not received training in church school distinctiveness. The close relationship with the diocese makes effective use of support and training. Recent changes in governance and leadership mean that strategic development as a church school is not entirely clear.


The Christian vision is lived through comprehensive care in educating and supporting all pupils. There is good provision for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) which is appreciated by parents. As a result pupils speak very confidently and enthusiastically about their learning. Parents appreciate communications from the school, and the approachability of staff. In particular, the system of an adult greeting every child and parent in the morning, and noting any issue is highly valued. This is a strong feature of pastoral care leading to a sense that every pupil is deeply valued. A well-developed system for using additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is evident helping with educational trips. There is a broad curriculum and a recently formulated definition of spirituality. Opportunities are taken to encourage spiritual development, but are not currently documented in subject teaching plans. Pupils reflect well on their learning, and apply the vision and values to their lives. The vision ensures the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community is prioritised. As a result, adults and pupils indicate they feel cared for and supported.

Pupils react positively to reflective moments in lessons, and informally in personal interaction. They broaden their horizons encouraged by dedicated teaching staff. Pupils understand Jesus' teaching promotes human flourishing. They realise his example may help them and others achieve the same. Pupils have some understanding of themselves as agents of change. They have a sense of the importance of justice for the whole global community. Participation in a variety of activities such as an anti-bullying week and 'Black Lives Matter' events demonstrates this. Some pupils know that the example of Jesus seeking justice for all God's people motivates this. They also understand are concerned about global issues around climate change. Members of the school council are articulate and enthusiastic in working together. They understand the vision and values may help them resolve differences of opinion and show dignity and respect to each other. This is also highly evident in all pupil behaviour. The Christian ideal of love and forgiveness is modelled in every way and ensures the flourishing of the whole school community.

Collective worship is delivered daily to the whole school. It is clearly and carefully invitational and inclusive, and pupils respond well to moments of reflection. Pupils can also point to moments where they have been inspired to action by worship, particularly around matters of personal behaviour. There is some understanding of prayer but limited appreciation of its importance. Pupils write their own prayers for use on special occasions in church, and some

speaking enthusiastically about delivering them using the microphone in the pulpit. The relationship with the church is particularly strong. Pupils have a real sense of ownership of the building. It is open every day and families often drop in for moments of reflection. As a result there is an easy familiarity with the building which has a significant impact on spiritual development. The vicar is active in the school and encourages it to think of the church building as an extension of itself. Pupils use simple formal responses in worship and are familiar with the Christian symbols. They understand the effective use of these things to focus spiritual thoughts. Church visits take place on the special occasions of the church year. This ensures pupils and adults understand the significance of the great Christian festivals and their impact on the world. Bible verses are considered in every act of worship, and there is an understanding of Anglican practice. The vision is strongly linked and featured in all worship. Pupils participate in collective worship to some extent, but opportunities for involvement in planning and leading are few.

Religious education has a subject leader who resources other staff. Involvement in diocesan training supports teaching and ensures good practice. RE is very well planned and delivered using various resources including 'Understanding Christianity'. Pupils express considerable appreciation of lessons and look forward to them. Their knowledge and understanding is impressive and confident covering a range of religions and worldviews. They show a thorough and imaginative understanding of God as three in one and readily discuss their understanding. Pupils flourish well in the subject in line with the vision. Brief comments in their books help them see how their work is developing, and teachers have a clear record of each pupil's progress. Understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith is a particularly strong feature through links with a school in India. Mutual visits take place sharing RE teaching practice between schools. Pupils and adults value this link as giving them a wider view of the Christian faith and appreciating difference and diversity. Pupils confidently explain that RE is important to understand one another in today's world.

	The effectiveness of RE is		Good
	<p>RE shows good practice in every respect. Planning is well organised and there is a broad, rich and engaging curriculum. Effective tracking of individuals shows very clear pupil progress, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their depth of knowledge, seen in their work, enhances their spiritual understanding of the world. Quality features include the ability of pupils to give confident and articulate accounts of Christianity and worldviews.</p>		
<b>Information</b>			
School	Frome St John's Church of England VA First School	Inspection date	30 January 2023
URN	123843	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided
Diocese/District	Bath & Wells	Pupils on roll	234
Acting Interim Headteacher	Jo Greathead		
Chair of Governors	Claire Levene Plumb		
Inspector	Jeremy Hellier	No.	899