

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

<b>Combe Down Church of England Primary School</b>	
Address	Church Road, Combe Down, Bath, BA2 5JQ
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

School's vision
<p>Together we plant, nurture and grow</p> <p>Underpinned by the parable of the mustard seed- 'If you have faith as small as a mustard seed: nothing will be impossible to you' Matthew 17:20</p> <p>It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree and the birds perched in its branches.' Luke 13:19</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's vision promotes a highly spiritual dimension to every aspect of life at Combe Down, enabling all to flourish.</li> <li>• The partnership between the school, church and trust communities is exceptionally strong. This is in line with the school's vision of growth. However, the role of pupils to live out the vision within these local communities is underdeveloped.</li> <li>• Leaders create a vibrant learning community where difference and diversity are welcomed and celebrated. Pupils feel empowered to take action on behalf of others.</li> <li>• Collective worship is a highly valued part of the school day and has a significant impact. This is because it strongly reflects the school's vision and values. However, the school recognises that the role of pupil worship ambassadors is limited to within the school.</li> <li>• Religious education (RE) is exceptionally well led and reflects the school's vision, for all to flourish as did the mustard seed. Consequently, pupils greatly enjoy the subject and recognise its prominent role at the heart of school life.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for pupil worship ambassadors to lead worship across church schools in the trust. This is so that they can share their expertise and deepen spiritual understanding.</li> <li>• Empower pupils to engage in social action within the local area. This is so that the inspirational vision will be lived out to a greater extent in partnership with the church.</li> </ul>

## Inspection findings

Combe Down has a vision which is deeply rooted in biblical teaching. It is lived out through the symbolism of the mustard tree which pupils recognise as their own school. It enables all members to flourish in the same way as the mustard seed in the parable. The vision is integral to every aspect of school life. It is driven by the strength of the school's partnership with its parents, the church and the trust. These partnerships are at the heart of its inspirational impact as a Church school. The contributions of the local clergy have a significant impact on school life. Nevertheless, school leaders have identified their desire to further develop the school's partnership with the church and village community. Collective worship and RE are given the highest priority in development plans. The robust self-evaluation process accurately identifies areas for development with very positive outcomes. Leaders' strong drive for improvement is demonstrated by the school's pro-active role within the trust. High quality professional development is fully embedded and integral to life at Combe Down. This leads to a high standard of confidence and expertise. Governors have deep insights into the way the vision impacts on all pupils.

The curriculum at Combe Down is a highly innovative and holistic expression of its Christian vision. Pupils understand that, just as good soil helps a seed grow into a mustard tree, so the curriculum supports their learning and flourishing. Christian values and spiritual reflection are seamlessly threaded through the curriculum, strengthening the impact of the vision. Pupils are enthused by the wide range of opportunities provided to excite their enquiring minds. Learning themes promote spiritual development which is integral to the curriculum. Extra-curricular and playground activities as well as a wide range of visits and visitors, are highly engaging. They enhance pupils' very positive experiences of school life. Examples of these are the displays of pupils' artwork and musical performances regularly held in church. High quality teaching is continually targeted to meet the needs of all pupils. Vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs are exceptionally well supported within this deeply caring community. There is a concerted approach by staff teams to adapt the curriculum to meet the learning needs of each pupil. In this way, lives are transformed and all are enabled to grow and flourish. Difference and diversity are fully embraced and welcomed. Pupils say they are all unique, all have talents and 'being different is amazing!'

The aspirational vision inspires pupils to be the best they can be within a culture of high expectations. Enrichment events such as careers fairs stretch pupils' imaginations and challenge stereotypes. Pupils express outrage at human exploitation of the natural world and take action to reduce plastic in the environment. They are passionate in their pursuit of causes which challenge injustice and support their vision. Examples of these are work nominated for the Anne Frank award and action in support of the homeless and Ukrainian refugees. Using big questions enables pupils to explore and respond to global, spiritual and ethical issues in an exceptionally secure setting. The vision has a significant impact on relationships within this nurturing community. An example of this is the way pupils say they look after each other 'like plants'. Pupils describe how they show respect and help, support and trust each other. The school and church provide exceptional support for all families as well as staff and pupils. An example of this is the pastoral and spiritual support provided by the church following the tragic death of a member of staff. Combe Down is an inclusive, warm and friendly school community which both adults and pupils recognise 'as a family'. As a result, bullying is rare. Healthy relationships are promoted very well by the relationships and sex education which reflects the vision. Leaders prioritise staff wellbeing which reflects a culture where all are supported in line with the vision. Consequently staff morale is high.

Collective worship is the heartbeat of the school community. This is because it promotes a



deep sense of spirituality which sustains and inspires all aspects of school life. Pupils' attitudes are extremely positive because they feel included and involved. They know that their views for improving worship are taken seriously and actioned. The impact of worship is regularly reviewed. One result is that the seating arrangement now explicitly recognises the equality and inclusion of all pupils. Worship promotes Christian values exceptionally well. An example of this is the way the life of Saint Patrick is linked to the challenging value of forgiveness. Pupils particularly appreciate the opportunities provided to be still and reflect as well as to sing joyously. The very popular song taken with words from St Matthew's gospel embeds the vision in the school's worship. Prayer and reflection are integral to the school day and have a powerful impact. Anglican practice is embedded in formal greetings and responses. As a result of this, pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The school visits the church each week for Open the Book worship led by the Children's Minister. Pupils greatly enjoy this form of worship which has a very positive impact on their spiritual development. Pupils play a key role in planning and leading worship in church as well as in school. Worship ambassadors provide feedback for adult worship leaders, alongside governors. Although they have visited another Church school in the trust to observe worship they have not had the opportunity to lead in another partner Church school.

RE strongly reflects the vision by contributing exceptionally well to pupils' high levels of respect for people's beliefs. It is very well balanced in line with Church school expectations. Teaching is highly motivating and challenging. It enables pupils to reflect deeply and critically explore their own beliefs and those of others. Consequently, RE makes a substantial contribution to pupils' spiritual growth. Regular enrichment activities such as Easter and Christmas Expressions deepen pupils understanding of Christianity. An established link with a school community in Uganda enables pupils to understand Christianity as a living global faith. Events such as Inter Faith Week are used very effectively. As a result, pupils show high levels of interest and respectful understanding of a range of faiths. The leadership of RE is of the highest quality. Following a robust review of the subject it was decided that a specialist teaches all classes and this is having a significant impact. The subject leaders have developed ambitious curriculum plans and good systems to understand and implement next steps in learning. Leaders benefit from diocesan professional development. They share their learning with staff which ensures that the subject maintains its high profile in the curriculum.

Information			
School	Combe Down Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	17 March 2023
URN	142943	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Bath & Wells	Pupils on roll	409
MAT/Federation	The Palladian Academy Trust		
Co-headteachers	Jane Gascoigne / Jo Bird		
Chair of Trust Board	Ruth Baluch / Donna Tandy (CEO)		
Inspector	Daphne Spitzer	No.	37