

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

<b>Widcombe Church of England VA Junior School</b>	
Address	Pulteney Road, Bath, BA2 4JG
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
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Excellent

School's vision
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Be the Best You Can Be</b></p> <p>'On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them the ability.' (Acts2:1-4)</p> <p>We inspire and nurture the children to be filled with the fire they need to go out into the world and be their best selves.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's inspirational leaders create a culture of exceptional care and support which lives out its Christian vision. Through this, pupils are enabled to grow in love for learning, each other and the world around them.</li> <li>• A highly original approach to spiritual growth, embedded in the whole curriculum has a strong impact on all aspects of school life. This contributes significantly to the school's vision enabling all to flourish.</li> <li>• Leaders, together with staff, 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>• Pupils have an excellent understanding of their roles as leaders of worship. This is ensuring its high quality development at the heart of the school's vision. They are now sharing their expertise with their partner schools, though not with the other Church schools in the trust.</li> <li>• The high quality of teaching and learning in RE at Widcombe Juniors is excellent. As a result, it is recognised as a very enjoyable and valued academic subject enabling all to flourish.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for pupil collective worship ambassadors to work collaboratively with their peers in other Church schools, and lead across the trust. This is so that they can share their expertise and deepen spiritual growth of all involved.</li> </ul>



## Inspection findings

Widcombe Junior School has a vision that is deeply rooted in biblical teaching and its local context at the heart of the city of Bath. The experience of the apostles during Pentecost inspires pupils to be confident learners who enthuse about their time at school. This has a powerful impact on the whole school community enabling all to flourish. The vision, and its linked values, are fully embedded in the school day. This means that pupils talk with animation and passion about what they mean to them on a personal level. The partnership between the school, church, trust and diocese are at the heart of the school's success. It sustains and promotes the school's continuing strong focus on its development as a Church school. Widcombe Juniors enjoys close links with the music department of Bath Abbey which bring mutual benefits. Pupils are regularly invited to be part of the abbey choir which greatly enhances the quality of singing at the school. The school's actions are marked by a generosity of spirit which increases the vision's impact. Professional development for all is a high priority and has a powerful transformational effect. This creates a cohesive staff team who flourish because leaders care deeply about their wellbeing. This, in turn, leads to a high level of confidence and expertise. Governors have deep insights into the way the vision impacts on pupils. This is due to the rigorous and robust self-evaluation process which accurately identifies areas for development.

The school's own creative curriculum is a highly innovative expression of its Christian vision. It has a profound effect on pupils. This is because Christian values and spiritual reflection are seamlessly threaded through and strengthening the vision's impact. The rich innovative curriculum empowers pupils to challenge themselves to be the best they can be. Pupils rightly say the vision and their values enable them to 'stretch themselves' just as the apostles grew into such confident people at Pentecost. The dynamic and proactive curriculum recognises that no two pupils are the same and neither should two learning journeys. Consequently, pupils fully recognise that they are never in competition with their peers. Instead, they understand their role to support and encourage others to be the best they can be. In this way the vision promotes a strong sense of equality. Amongst the wide range of responsible roles enjoyed by pupils are those of equality ambassadors. As a result, pupils are passionate in their pursuit of causes that support their vision and challenge inequality and social injustice. They are continuously generating and leading action to reduce air pollution within the city centre. Groups and individuals lead action such as to support the recent earthquakes appeal by litter picking. Collective worship ambassadors are currently engaging in action to provide learning opportunities for less advantaged children across the world.

The vision creates a very caring school community. Pupils talk of their pride in their school because they recognise their voice matters. They think highly of all who teach them and say that staff support them to understand 'their feelings'. In this way, pupils show a high degree of respect and sensitivity in their relationships with their peers and all within the community. Diversity and difference is embraced and very welcomed. This means that Widcombe Juniors is a warm, inclusive community where bullying is rare. Healthy relationships are promoted very well by the school's relationships education curriculum which very effectively reflects the vision. Leaders create a culture where all are supported by encouragement and compassionate care. As a result, staff morale is high. The vision enables pupils to articulate a highly developed understanding of spiritual growth. They describe it as a continual question 'what will fill you with fire today?' A wide range of opportunities enable pupils to reflect deeply on 'their own lives and identity'. This has a significant impact on their learning and personal development.

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




inclusive and strongly reflects the school's vision. As a result, it has a transformational impact on all present. It empowers and inspires pupils, such as the collective worship ambassadors, to act as courageous advocates challenging injustice. Pupils' leadership and their involvement in worship are integral to the daily life of the school as well as its development. Pupils' roles include providing live music and stimulating artwork and dance. Their heartfelt and inspirational singing contrasts very effectively with moments of quiet and stillness. This promotes a deep sense of spirituality which sustains and inspires all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils inspire the whole community to think deeply about Christian teaching, often selecting relevant texts from the Bible. It empowers pupils to reflect on their meanings with regard to their school's Christian values. The meaning of the value of honesty is understood and shared very effectively by contributions from pupils. Innovative ways of communicating these thoughts such as by video recordings considerably enhance their impact.

Consequently, worship promotes Christian values exceptionally well. The support from the local churches is significant. In particular the part played by the local Anglican minister working collaboratively with the collective worship ambassadors has a huge impact. Regular visits to church to celebrate Christian festivals are very effective in promoting an understanding of Anglican practice and tradition. The collective worship ambassadors work with their peers in one other Trust school, though not yet more widely with other pupils leaders across the Trust.

RE is recognised as an exciting core subject at the heart of this Church school curriculum. It strongly reflects the vision by enabling all pupils to 'be the best they can be'. Pupils demonstrate a deep love of the subject particularly valuing the opportunities provided to learn about a wide range of beliefs and world faiths including Christianity. The curriculum content is appropriately balanced in line with Church school expectations. Teaching is highly motivating and challenging. Consequently, standards of learning are exemplary. Pupils are fully engaged, reflect deeply and critically explore their own beliefs. They value learning about the faiths of peers within their school community. A key feature of teaching is the way pupils learn to interrogate texts to increase their knowledge and understanding of the Bible and other sacred books. The inspirational subject leaders have developed an innovative approach to RE teaching which is highly interactive. Very effective systems have been embedded for teachers to understand and implement pupils' next steps in learning. Staff training has had a profound impact on pupils' attainment and their thorough enjoyment of the subject. The leaders regularly share their knowledge and expertise with other Church schools in the trust.



	The effectiveness of RE is		Excellent	
	<p>Teaching and learning in RE is at least good and often better due to the highly engaging and inspiring curriculum. As a result, pupils respond enthusiastically making exceptional progress in their learning. This is due to a concerted approach by staff to enabling all pupils including those identified as vulnerable, flourish academically in RE.</p>			
Information				
School	Widcombe Church of England VA Junior School	Inspection date	12 May 2023	
URN	143559	VC/VA/ Academy	Academy	
Diocese/District	Bath & Wells	Pupils on roll	240	
MAT/Federation	The Palladian Academy Trust			
Executive Headteacher	Rebecca Wilson      Head of School - Aaron Harley			
Chair of Governors	Darren McKay   Ruth Balch - Chair of the Trust Board			
Inspector	Daphne Spitzer	No.	37	