

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Five Islands Academy	
Address	Carn Gwaval, Church Road, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly, TR21 0NA
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

School's vision
<p>Our inclusive vision for learning is anchored in hope and inspired by our extraordinary environment, our creative islands community and the far-reaching horizons in every direction. As a Church of England school, and through our academy values and curriculum, we nurture curious, collaborative, creative global learners, ready to flourish. Hope is an anchor for the soul, steadfast and sure. Hebrews 6:19</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision of the school is totally embedded and drives its work. It is exceptionally well matched to the needs of the community. Integrity, determination and above all care for the students characterise the exceptional Church school leadership of this academy. • Students support one another well and have hopes and aspirations for the future. Restorative justice is a key stone of the school's behaviour policy. However, students do not fully understand the Christian foundations behind this approach. • As a result of its vision the school has extensive partnerships with many organisations. These are highly beneficial and develop students' spirituality. Staff do not have an agreed understanding of how spiritual development can be enhanced further. • Collective worship is an important part of school life. However, its impact is greater at primary level than secondary. There are not enough opportunities for students to plan, lead or evaluate worship and at secondary level the Christian message is not always explicit. • The leadership of Religious education (RE) is excellent. It underpins the school's vision. Throughout the school it develops a deep understanding of a range of faiths. Many students consider RE to be their favourite subject.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At secondary level, refresh students' understanding of the Christian narrative so that they deepen their understanding of the effect Christian principles have on life in a Church school. • Involve students more in the planning, leading and evaluating of collective worship so they develop a greater sense of ownership of this part of the school day. • Ensure all staff share a clear understanding of and approach to the spiritual development of all, so that opportunities to develop this further are not missed.



Inspection findings

At Five Islands opportunities abound. Students eagerly involve themselves in many events and fulfil the vision of hope, ambition and widening horizons at this all-age school. The vision is rooted in a Christian narrative of hope and leaders and staff articulate this confidently. The vision runs as a thread through the school and pockets of excellent practice have been developed. The dynamic, principled and forward-looking leadership of the headteacher supported by her team are determined to ensure that each student, however young, flourishes. All adults are supported in their work. They feel valued and trusted. Teachers are given opportunities to develop as future church school leaders.

Trust leaders are entirely supportive of the Church of England foundation of the school, although it is the only Church school in the Leading Edge Trust. There is synergy between the school's values and vision and those of the Trust. Trust leaders make bold decisions based on the vision. For example, they retained a very small primary base on one of the islands even when numbers were very low as to make it unviable economically. They have supported a change of role to enable a member of staff to develop RE across the island schools. This curriculum is now being adopted by the other non-church schools in the Trust. Both the Trust members and the local academy board members are regular visitors to the school. They rigorously monitor and hold the school to account for its Christian distinctiveness.

The school supports students with special educational needs and/or disabilities exceptionally well. It is highly inclusive. Those who are vulnerable are nurtured through a wide variety of different systems and consequently they feel safe and flourish. One parent said, 'I know my child had special needs, but I did not need to seek a diagnosis and wait. The school knew immediately what to do'. Each student is cherished as unique and for those who need it a bespoke curriculum is created. The school works closely with families and there is always a sense of navigating difficulties together. This is a further indication of the vision being lived out.

Relationships within the school are very good. Primary age children show huge kindness to one another. On one of the smaller bases one child asked another if it would be helpful if she waited with her as she was very slow in eating her lunch and her other friends had gone out to play. Secondary age students show respect to their peers and staff and some Year 9 students had baked a cake for a member of staff who had been giving them extra help. They recognise the uniqueness and talents of each person, and they celebrate these. Students of all ages know the importance of tolerance and treating all with dignity. Restorative justice through circle times is part of the school's behaviour policy. While younger students link this to biblical teaching about forgiveness and reconciliation, older students do not do so. The same is true of the values of love and compassion.

The multiple partnerships which have been developed are exceptional and support the school in living out its vision. These are particularly evident during Project Weeks when students use their own initiative to nurture their curiosity. The school works well with the local churches on the islands and both the Anglican and Methodist minister are regular visitors. They support the collective worship in the school, and students use the churches for RE lessons and special events. The school works well with the Diocese. Governors access diocesan training and students have participated in virtual assemblies with the cathedral. The children on one island base wrote an additional verse to a Celtic blessing for the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Primary aged children have formed a partnership with Chelsea pensioners who visit the islands. They write prayers for them and the pensioners in turn visit



the school and talk of their life histories to the students.

Because of its determination to live out its vision, the school is the hub of the community. Other partnerships for example with the local wildlife trust, local council and conservation groups support the students learning how to be stewards of the planet. Students of all ages involve themselves in a wide variety of social action and charity work. They are currently fundraising to bring Syrian refugees who live in Cornwall to the islands for a holiday. They have planted marram grass to stop sand dunes eroding. They stand up for injustice and are very vociferous about equity and fairness. Their well developed sense of justice meant they were early participants in the Island Pride Festival. All of these opportunities reinforce the vision of nurturing curious collaborative learners.

Spirituality is explored not only through the curriculum, the environment but also through unplanned moments. When whales were recently spotted, younger students were full of awe and wonder. Older students appreciate and question the higher beyond them. They do this in circle time which is frequently used as a time to reflect and ponder big questions. However, staff do not have a shared understanding of spirituality and hence opportunities to enhance it are missed especially with older students.

Collective worship is regarded by younger pupils as an opportunity to come together and worship. It takes different forms in the different bases, dependent upon numbers. On Fridays the whole of Key Stage 2 come together for celebration worship. Music and singing are an important part of worship especially for the younger students. They participate in special events in the Church's year in the churches on the five islands. These include a Christingle service, a Mothering day service and Christmas and Easter and leavers' services. At secondary level, while collective worship always includes invitational prayer and is inclusive, it is seen by students as a time to think about them acting as agents of change or a time when they receive messages. Opportunities for teaching about Christian beliefs and values are sometimes missed. Students of all ages are not involved enough in planning and leading worship or in evaluation.

The leadership of RE is excellent. The school's vision is evident in the RE curriculum. The head of RE has designed this and it builds progressively throughout the school. It includes exciting and creative activities which extend students' knowledge and understanding. It provides opportunities for pupils to develop age-appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis, and interpretation in a safe environment. There is an appropriate emphasis upon worldviews and faiths other than Christianity. Students show an appreciation of the worldwide nature of Christianity. Teachers are very well supported in teaching RE. All students in the secondary school take GCSE RE and there has been a considerable improvement in outcomes over the last two years.



Information			
School	Five Islands Academy	Inspection date	11 July 2023
URN	144638	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Truro	Pupils on roll	265
MAT/Federation	Leading Edge Academies Partnership		
Principal	Rachel Gibb		
Chair of Governors	Jeremy Brown		
Inspector	Marcia Headon	No.	761