

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Corfe Castle Church of England Primary School	
Address	East Street, Corfe Castle, Wareham, BH20 5EE
School vision	
<p>'Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.'</p> <p>1 Peter 4:10</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a period of challenge and change in the school, the renewed Christian vision is enabling people to flourish. Pupils and adults are gaining confidence as they are encouraged to identify their gifts and share them with others. Motivated by the vision and leading by example, leaders are inspiring pupils and adults to work together to renew and strengthen relationships with the local community. Support from the Coastal Learning Partnership multi-academy trust (MAT) is significant. A rich programme of professional training opportunities is enabling staff in all roles to develop and thrive. Well-planned and diligently co-ordinated support from a diverse range of local church leaders is enhancing collective worship and the spiritual life of the school. Leadership of religious education (RE) is of a very high level. This means that the subject has a high profile in the school and that teachers are very well supported. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For staff to agree a shared language for talking about spirituality. This is so that they can plan more effectively and systematically for opportunities throughout the school and across the curriculum. Develop pupils' confidence in taking an active role in enacting their own ideas for tackling injustice and making a positive difference. This is to help deepen pupils' understanding and to enable them to experience the wider impact of using their gifts to serve others. For the multi-academy trust (MAT) to ensure the robustness of its systems for monitoring and evaluating RE, collective worship and the impact of the Christian vision. This is to ensure that MAT leaders have an accurate understanding at all times of the school's effectiveness as a Church school and of its development priorities. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>At Corfe Castle School, pupils and adults use their gifts joyfully and generously to serve others. Following a difficult season of challenge and change, the school community has adopted a new Christian vision. Supported by four biblically rooted values, the vision is inspiring everyone to discover their gifts and use them well. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of these values - courage, community, perseverance and belief - as active reminders of the vision in everyday life.</p>	

These Christian values are central. Parents describe them as ‘stitched-into’ the life of the school. A new trustee is currently helping leaders to embed the theological dimension still further.

The MAT’s support for this small school is generous. This is prompted by its own vision in which service is a core value. This resonates well with the vision of the school. The MAT provides a high level of staffing. Regular in-person visits from MAT officers are enhancing the work of the school and assisting its recovery. Staff in all roles access a range of professional development opportunities. The MAT respects the autonomy of this school. It has delegated authority for RE, collective worship and the development of the school’s Christian ethos to the local governing body (LGB). This has been effective until now. However, the recent changes in the LGB mean that the MAT’s systems for monitoring the Christian vision have temporarily been weakened.

The vision is shaping the curriculum as school leaders and MAT colleagues tailor learning opportunities to suit every pupil within the three mixed-age classes. RE planning now allows for more investigation, exploration and opportunities for individual reflection. One outcome is that pupils are increasingly able to talk about the key learning. A rich programme of extra-curricular activities makes good use of adults’ gifts and expertise and caters for pupils’ different strengths and interests. Pupils grow in confidence and resilience as their unique skills and passions are recognised and nurtured. The school’s informal provision for spirituality is rich. Incidental opportunities for spiritual development include forest school, incubating and hatching eggs and visiting Salisbury cathedral. Spirituality is not however currently formally identified within curriculum plans and so some opportunities are missed.

Exemplary partnership working with local churches enriches and enlivens collective worship and the spiritual life of this small school. A diverse team of clergy and ministers from different Anglican, Salvation Army and United Reformed churches and an Open the Book team lead and enrich worship. Ably co-ordinated by a school leader, this team works very closely together to plan acts of worship. Regular planning meetings, such as a leaders’ brunch, involve staff and clergy and ensure that worship is varied yet cohesive. Pupils’ evaluations of worship reflect their enjoyment of this variety. They recall with enthusiasm for example the ‘kind and happy’ storytelling of the rector and the ‘fun’ Open the Book sessions. Adults mention being ‘made to think’ in clergy-led collective worship.

A strong commitment to wellbeing is evident in the school. Staff describe leaders’ care for them as being ‘amazing’. Parents speak of having ‘complete faith’ in the whole staff team to take care of their children. The current leaders have refreshed the school’s approach to managing behaviour so that it aligns well with the Christian values. As a result, behaviour is good. The system of ‘praise points’ is colour-coded along with the four values. During collective worship, adults frequently revisit the vision and values and explore their biblical roots with increasing depth. In the weekly celebration worship, pupils gain deeper understanding through the varied real-life illustrations of the vision and values in action. This ensures that pupils develop and deepen their understanding. Inspired by the vision, pupils explain how they choose to use their gifts to care for one another. Pupils of all ages play well together at breaktimes. ‘Buddy’ pairings of older pupils with Reception children support wellbeing. Some of these friendships continue even after pupils leave the school. ‘Stormbreak’, a recent NHS initiative, is proving effective in supporting pupils’ mental health.

Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility. This links closely with the vision as they want to use their gifts to make a difference. The school’s Christian values inspire them. As a result of specific acts of worship, pupils have been inspired to think about more actively championing good causes. The school’s links with the Dorset Wildlife Trust and the local foodbank have prompted pupils to act. One example is their support for the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution. A notable feature of their plans is their desire to partner with others, for example the Swanage litter-picking community. Pupil voice is effective. Pupils know that, if they have an idea, then teachers will support them to try to

make it work. However, pupils do not often take the lead in initiating social action projects.

Leaders themselves provide striking examples of responsibility in action. During the season of challenge and change, relationships with the local community became unsettled. Inspired by the vision, the current leaders have been quick to identify opportunities to re-establish these relationships, for example through holding sports day in the castle grounds. In partnership with the church, leaders hosted a 'warm space' in school. They supported their active PTFA in hosting a community screening of the Coronation. As a result of initiatives like these, the number of adults joining pupils in church for special services has increased.

RE has a high profile in the school. Following a number of staffing changes, leaders have wisely decided that all class teachers should teach RE. This reflects the subject's importance in the school. It also enables all staff to be involved in supporting pupils' spiritual development as they think deeply about questions of meaning and purpose. The highly experienced subject leader, who has led RE in this school for two years, provides detailed and effective support for staff. This leadership extends to supporting two other schools in the MAT. The curriculum is well-sequenced and is based on Understanding Christianity and the Emmanuel project, with an additional unit on Buddhism. The RE leader continues to review and strengthen the curriculum, for example, through the introduction of 'journey days'. Themes include Chinese New Year and a peace day. RE is a popular subject. Lively and stimulating activities, for example when studying the Jewish festival of Sukkot, ensure that pupils remember key facts and learn well. Pupils enjoy having choices in the way they respond. Leaders' monitoring of RE has accurately identified that pupils' understanding of Christianity is a little deeper than their understanding of other major faiths and worldviews. Leaders' plans to address this are well-considered and appropriate.

The inspection findings indicate that Corfe Castle Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	25 September 2023	URN	142145
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	67
Diocese	Salisbury		
MAT/Federation	Coastal Learning Partnership		
Headteacher	Amy Howe		
Chair	Kay Davies		
Inspector	Penny Burnside	No.	772