

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

Great Torrington Bluecoat Church of England Primary School	
Address	Borough Road, Great Torrington, EX38 7NU
School vision	
<p>Bluecoat's vision stems from the Church of England's vision to: Educate for 'Life In All its Fullness' (John 10:10). We seek to be a spiritually vibrant learning community to which all contribute and within which all are valued and empowered to excel. We recognise every individual in our school community as unique in the sight of God and we look to live by the commandment to 'Love one another as I have loved you' (John 14:34).</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is driven by a strong sense of purpose as it lives out its mission as the only primary school in the town. This is expressed through its dynamic Christian vision which flows through every aspect of the life of the school.</li> <li>• The school's values are based on the biblical Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). These are valued by everyone in the school community and profoundly influential within and beyond the school.</li> <li>• The breadth of the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities expands pupils' horizons. This range of experiences contributes to their fulness of life, rounded personal development and capacity to be agents of change.</li> <li>• As a Bluecoat school, the school has developed particular strengths in inclusion and care for vulnerable children and families. Everyone strives to be supportive, welcoming and accepting of all. Here, people matter.</li> <li>• The school is strongly outward-facing. It offers generous support for other schools in challenging circumstances and makes a creative contribution to the wider life of the town. It builds rich partnerships with others who share the school's vision and, thus, extends its reach.</li> </ul>	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to affirm and promote the school's Christian vision as the shared strength which anchors the school as Bluecoat meets present and future challenges.</li> <li>• Ensure that support and evaluation of collective worship, and staff training more widely, embed each aspect of the school's spirituality policy.</li> <li>• Re-focus the planning, assessment and professional development of religious education (RE) in ways which encourage more challenging questions of meaning and purpose.</li> </ul>	
Inspection findings	
<p>Great Torrington Bluecoat School epitomises the Church of England vision for education, to be 'Deeply Christian, serving the common good'. As the only primary school in Great Torrington, it offers an inclusive welcome for all families in the town and surrounding villages. The school's</p>	

Christian vision, of a living spirituality in which all are valued, empowered and able to contribute, is the lifeblood of the school. It is grounded in the belief that everyone is loved by God and should, in turn, love one another. In line with Bluecoat's inclusive ethos, the vision has been formed with the participation of the whole school community. Because of this, it is known and understood by all. People in the school enrich the vision with their own sense of Christian purpose. Leaders talk about offering 'fulness of life' (John 10:10), while others say, 'We are the hands and feet of Jesus'.

In daily school life, the vision is interpreted through values based on the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22): love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Everyone speaks readily about the importance of the Fruit of the Spirit as a way of living. The school community shows this through their strong relationships, kindness, patience and resilience. Everyone tries to treat one another well, within a strong ethos of respect and tolerance. Parents, both religious and non-religious, speak powerfully about the impact of 'the Fruits' on their children within and beyond the school. They note particularly how the school fosters a lasting strength of character, acceptance of others and a willingness to forgive.

The sense that everyone matters to God pervades the school, creating a community in which all are welcome, known and valued. Because the school is faithful to the historic Bluecoat vision, care for disadvantaged and vulnerable children and families is a real strength. The school draws a significantly higher proportion of children with special needs and disabilities (SEND) than the national average. Specially developed provision in The Nest and Bluecoat Rooms offers support to pupils from a wider region. Because leaders recognise the importance of early intervention, nursery provision extends to children from the age of 2. This spirit of inclusion spreads across the school, enabling all to flourish. There is additional support for children, parents and staff when things get difficult. Staff are warmly appreciated. Pupils speak of a love of learning; they embrace challenge, behave well and accept difference. Parents praise staff for drawing in all children, stimulating those at the margins, overcoming reluctance and going 'the extra mile'. 'Here, my child feels they matter'. Pupils are confident that staff 'notice' them, with their different needs and concerns.

Leaders are aware of the rich opportunities and geographical challenges of the school's rural setting. The curricular and extra-curricular offer is shaped to respond to this. Priority is given to extending pupils' horizons, locally, regionally and nationally, stretching their view of their own and the world's limitations. This helps them to journey towards fulness of life. The love of God's world is fostered through outdoor activities and Forest School. There are extensive clubs and visits, including to buildings of major world faiths. The school holds a number of awards including for music, sport and as an International School. There is a particularly strong emphasis on global citizenship within the curriculum and through active overseas links and trips. A well-structured web of pupil ambassadors encourages pupils' development of courageous advocacy. Pupils have a deepening understanding of the active part they can play in local and global issues, such as climate change. They are confident and persistent in speaking up against injustice.

In collective worship and RE, leadership is new and keen. Both areas are well-resourced, taken seriously by school leaders and undertaken conscientiously by staff. Teachers are strongly supported to deliver both these aspects of the life of the school well in their own classrooms. Pupils encounter a range of styles in worship, enhanced by partnerships with a variety of local churches. The parish Festival Experiences are especially popular. In response, pupils are curious, open and engaged. In RE, material is challenging and pupils engage with willing interest. RE leaders are particularly committed to extending pupils' experience by exploring religious diversity. School has worked to ensure teachers have a good subject knowledge for teaching Christianity. Staff partner with local RE teacher groups to extend professional practice. However both worship and RE miss opportunities for deeper reflection. Learning in RE often focuses too much on comprehension of religious language and describing religious practice. Pupils are not given enough opportunity to

explore more profound questions of religious meaning or to consider their own standpoints. Similarly, worship often stops short of challenging children to think deeply about life's 'big questions', either from a faith or non-faith perspective. In the wider curriculum, some aspects of the school's vision of 'vibrant spirituality' are well embedded. Pupils' experiences of learning are shaped through a strong policy for spirituality. There are many examples of 'relationships with self, with others, with the world'. However, opportunities to consider the aspect of 'the relationship with the beyond' are more rarely followed through.

Driven by its vision, Bluecoat is an outward facing community, committed to serving the common good. Because of this, leaders have generously supported two other local schools in challenging circumstances, working with the Diocese and Local Authority. Senior staff have gone on to become heads of other church schools. Governors use the vision as a plumb line against which to judge important strategic decisions. Partnerships with local churches enable the school to live out its vision more fully. Local Christians provide leavers' bibles and contribute creatively to collective worship. They offer high-level welfare support through the school, such as Christians Against Poverty. The relationship with the parish church is being enthusiastically re-invigorated. Families particularly value the Friday night Allsorts Club, as out-of-school activities for local youngsters are otherwise very limited. Bluecoat significantly enhances the life of Great Torrington. It contributes extensively to local community and charitable activity. It is the backbone of the much-loved Mayfair and at the heart of new traditions such as the Christmas lantern procession. Through its generous contributions, the school continues to weave a Christian thread through the tapestry of the life of the wider town.

The inspection findings indicate that Great Torrington Bluecoat Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	21 September 2023	URN	113377
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	464
Diocese	Exeter		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Angela Fleming		
Chair	Jackie Furseman & Louise Hunter		
Inspector	Barbara Easton	No.	862