

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Andrew's Church of England, Voluntary Aided Primary School

Address

West Street, Fontmell Magna, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 0PF

Christian vision

We believe in ourselves, each other, our community and a God who loves us. Because we believe we are able to thrive, learn and shine in all the ways we should, having a positive impact on the world we live in. Underpinned by, 'All things are possible to one who believes.' Mark 9:23

School strengths

- A transformational vision coupled with effective leadership has resulted in a community who believe "all things are possible".
- Inspired by the vision, leaders actively create a school culture of inclusion and equity. Pupils and adults are valued for who they are. The generous and encouraging ethos provides all with a voice, enabling them to grow and believe in themselves.
- Partnerships between the church, village and school are strong and mutually beneficial, nourishing collective worship and the wider curriculum.
- Collective worship and prayer are an integral and important part of the school day, strongly reflecting the vision and values. As a result, the whole school community flourishes spiritually.
- Religious education (RE) is well led and reflects the vision for all to flourish. The belief that 'all is possible' is threaded through the curriculum. Pupils enjoy RE and recognise its significant role at the heart of the school.

Areas for development

- Empower pupils to engage and direct social action so that the inspirational vision is lived out in the wider community.
- Ensure a shared language and understanding of spiritual development so that all can flourish spiritually.
- Deepen pupil leadership of worship, including in planning. This is to support their spiritual understanding of their own beliefs and values.

Inspection findings

At the heart of St Andrew's is the deeply embedded vision, which has enabled the community to grow and believe in itself, in others and in God. The vision, upheld by strong leadership, has ensured this small school is 'thriving' and 'shining'. The Sherborne Area Schools Trust (SAST) schools' vision and flourishing programme is an integral part of school improvement work. Adults are united in their desire to see every pupil flourish. The recent changes to the leadership structure are proving key to the school's journey. In line with the vision, leader's actions are underpinned with hope, belief and determination. The love for the pupils and their families is evident through the handling of challenging conversations. There is a very high level of trust and engagement from parents because of compassion and understanding from leaders.

Parents recognise the recent changes have resulted in a thriving school experience, not just for their children but for themselves too. They hold the school in high esteem. They acknowledge that staff go 'above and beyond' to meet the needs of pupils and families. They appreciate the broad curriculum opportunities and wide variety of extracurricular clubs. Parents see the impact on pupil confidence as pupils engage in inter-school events. Parents value the involvement of the local church including the 'cost of living' support.

Through collective worship, adults nurture and encourage pupils to shine. Adults know pupils well; supporting pupil interactions in worship is both effective and respectfully unobtrusive. As a result, pupils engage well, listening and responding thoughtfully in moments of stillness and prayer. The sensitive use of simple liturgy, including the Lord's prayer and school creed, provide a familiar pattern which pupils enjoy. As the candles are lit, pupils invite 'God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit' to join them. Prayer is important in the school and punctuates the day; each class has its own prayer book. Pupils use the time to be still and reflect. They see the value of this in the busyness of the day. Families value regular opportunities to share worship in church, enriching adults' and pupils' spirituality. During celebration worship certificates which focus on the core values and the 'believe' chart are presented. Belief is the golden thread running through the school and holding all together. Reflection areas around school encourage pupils to offer thoughts and prayers related to worship and the school's vision. These enhance the spiritual development of those who engage. However, the school does not have a shared understanding of spirituality and opportunities across the curriculum are not clearly defined. Pupils in the ethos group regularly evaluate reflective journals and class reflection spaces. Their feedback prompts improvements, keeping worship relevant and creative. Pupils contribute to collective worship. However, they have limited involvement in planning and delivery.

Highly interactive reflection areas which are in every classroom, as well as the hall, library and entrance areas, help pupils to calmly respond to collective worship. These journals allow pupils to respond creatively to the themes in worship. Clear connections are made between whole school and class worship times. Pupils, inspired by the story of Johnny Appleseed, planted their own apple seeds and painted trees. They link the school vision to the encouraging messages from their tree, 'If you keep on trying and never give up then you will achieve.' Their understanding of the vision is reinforced in their explanations of their bell of kindness and the miniature bottles to whisper and store encouraging messages. Pupils enjoy having the space to read and think about favourite Bible verses. Their prayers written in these spaces show a developing understanding of spirituality.

Supportive and experienced Church school governors ensure that the Christian vision remains central to the school's purpose. Their involvement includes leading 'Boat Club' and being visible to

staff, parents and pupils. Their monitoring is focused and useful, leading to challenge and change. They are passionate in their support and know the school well as they are frequently present. The whole school staff and governing board, as well as the trust, work effectively together to enable pupils and adults to flourish. The trust provides regular opportunities for the chair to meet with others to share ideas and support. The school enjoys a good relationship with the local church, village and wider community. Regular visits by the vicar and church team support pupils in letting their light shine. Children are welcomed into the church for main festival services and interactive experiences around Christmas and Easter. Consequently, positive relationships are developed.

The school's Christian vision is at the heart of its effective work with vulnerable pupils. Leaders work tirelessly to access appropriate support, motivated by the desire to see every pupil 'thrive', 'shine' and 'believe in themselves'. The school's Christian vision and its rigorous implementation by the leadership and staff, has resulted in positive behaviour and relationships. Supported by a school behaviour policy steeped in reconciliation and rooted in the vision, pupils are able to take responsibility for their actions. With adult support, pupils practise forgiveness. They look out for each other with love and gentleness. Regular opportunities for older pupils to buddy up with their younger pupils, including in the dining room, deepen personal relationships. Adults live out and explicitly teach values of kindness, love, courage, perseverance, honesty and respect. Pupils link these changes to the vision. Parents spoke highly of the support for vulnerable children and the wider family.

Well resourced provision in RE demonstrates its high status in the school. The whole school curriculum is carefully planned and resourced so that connections are made between all subjects. RE is monitored by leaders and a link governor for RE. As a result, the effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE is consistently under review. It is matched to pupils' needs, enabling all to flourish. RE lessons pose thought provoking questions and a safe space for pupils to reflect on their own spiritual and philosophical convictions. One child explained how through class discussion his viewpoint had altered when comparing fundamental and liberal beliefs. They talk confidently about things which intrigue and challenge them. Pupils speak enthusiastically about RE, how it helps 'you know and share different faiths and how everyone has a voice'. They understand Christianity is a global world faith and the importance of learning about world views. Books reflect the engaging opportunities pupils have to develop their knowledge of world religions and worldviews with respectful curiosity. Pupils express thoughts and feelings about the world, build on each other's comments and challenge respectfully in discussion. Although pupils have concerns about the world, including deforestation, the impact of this is limited. Opportunities to inspire and empower pupils to take positive social action are underdeveloped.

The RE lead ensures that all staff are well supported. They disseminate training and upskill the teaching team, enabling them to grow in confidence and thus teach effectively. Enhanced systems for recording and monitoring pupils' learning have recently been introduced. Consequently, there is shared understanding and consistency, and pupils make good progress in RE. Assessment includes regular retrieval questions which focus on ensuring that all pupils understand what is being taught and reinforce learning for those pupils who have not fully comprehended. The RE lead ensures the depth of questioning is of a high standard enabling pupils to deepen their understanding. Good links with the Diocese of Salisbury ensures the RE lead accesses current relevant training.

St Andrew's is a welcoming and nurturing Church school. Its empowering Christian vision inspires and strengthens the whole school community. Adults and pupils embody its purpose; thriving, learning, shining and flourishing together.

These inspection findings indicate that St Andrew's Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish.

Information					
School	St Andrew's Church of England Primary School				
URN	144951	Pupils on roll	81	VA/VC/Academy	Academy
Diocese	Salisbury Diocese				
Multi academy trust	Sherborne Area Schools Trust				
Executive Head	Debbie Brown Head of School: Dan King				
Chair of governors	Jonathan Pinder				
Inspector	Jane Gascoigne			No.	2226
Date of Inspection	22 September 2023				