

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

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Henstridge	
Address	Ash Walk, Henstridge, Templecombe, BA8 0QD
School vision	
<p>We create the space for your child to excel.</p> <p>This is based on John 15: 5 where Jesus says 'I am the vine and you are the branches. If you remain in me, and I in you, then you will bear much fruit.'</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has a strong, well developed Christian vision that is very relevant to the local context. As a result, pupils and the wider community are flourishing.</li> <li>• Pastoral care is outstanding for all involved in the school. This contributes significantly to good mental health and wellbeing.</li> <li>• There is a very effective collective worship programme which inspires action. Prayer is central to school and pupils readily involve themselves in personal prayer and reflection.</li> <li>• Well planned and effective religious education (RE) produces pupils who speak confidently about Christianity and world faiths.</li> <li>• There is a strong sense of the importance of relationships with the wider community. A variety of interactions provide mutual and substantial benefit.</li> </ul>	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the strategic development of St Nicholas as a Church school. This to maintain the impetus towards academisation, and make the vision more visible in school policies.</li> <li>• Formally identify opportunities for promoting rich spiritual development in all curriculum subjects. This is in order to show pupils that spirituality pervades all areas of life.</li> <li>• Develop a more rigorous system to identify how and what pupils are learning in RE. This will ensure the development of reflective skills and subject knowledge.</li> </ul>	
Inspection findings	
<p>The school has a strong Christian vision which is clearly lived by staff and pupils alike. It is relevant to the community through promoting the biblical idea of spreading branches into the wider world. Pupils know the vision well, and they are enthusiastic in seeking a wider view of life beyond their immediate environment. As a result, their lives are enriched and they flourish well. The school is part of the Tower Learning Community, an informal group of headteachers which provides mutual support. A strong group of governors, with an impressive set of skills, regularly monitors the vision. This is evident in minutes and reports from regular visits. This means that school leadership has a clear strategic view of development as a Church school. As a result of this, the journey into membership of the Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust (BWMAT) is steadily advancing. There is a good relationship with the Diocese of Bath and Wells. The weekly emails from the education team encourage the leadership, especially with their spiritual reflections.</p>	

The vision encourages a broad curriculum following the 'spreading branches' on which it is based. Through lesson observation it is evident that pupils are effortlessly reflective learners. Pupils indicate their interest through quick and lively responses to challenges and questions in class. This extends to all learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Attention to detail in educating SEND pupils is very evident through their obvious engagement and enjoyment of learning. Reflective spaces support learning, especially through a learning garden and a wonderful bespoke library building. A shared understanding of spirituality is evident, and pupils readily speak of such moments in their lives. An example of this is seen in extra-curricular activity such as the school garden. However, opportunities for spiritual development in all curriculum subjects are not formally identified.

Collective worship is well organised, and has clear impact seen in the eager willingness of pupil participation. It links with the vision showing the branches of Christian care spreading from the vine that that is Jesus. Pupils are encouraged to be involved in a variety of ways, such as drama and enthusiastic singing. They also take part in planning of worship. Their evaluation of worship, shared with the headteacher, is driving future planning. This is seen in a request from Key Stage 2 pupils for occasional longer and more in-depth worship. Particularly impressive is the centrality and understanding of prayer. As a result, pupils are keen to pray spontaneously in collective worship. A spirit of thankfulness for God's world and creation is evident in their reflections. They also speak freely of the role prayer might play in healing. This arises from their knowledge of the healing miracles of Jesus in the Bible. The vicar is a regular leader of worship, and pupils are familiar with the church building through frequent visits. The impact of this is evident in a knowledge of Anglican practice, and an understanding of Christian symbols. As an example, pupils can readily explain the idea of the Trinity symbolised by the threefold candle used in worship. The worship is invitational and inclusive. Inclusivity is clearly demonstrated by the use of sign language in prayers. Pupils are inspired through worship. This is exemplified in a desire to prepare and deliver Christmas gifts to the homeless in a nearby town. All this clearly demonstrates the impact of worship on spiritual development.

The vision promotes the idea of interdependence, and as a result pupils care for one another. They behave well and are very considerate. The school council speaks of the importance of 'feeling monitors' to share emotions. 'Calm corners' and 'fidget toys' support pupil wellbeing. Pastoral care in this school is outstanding. All staff speak of how the community helps their mental health and wellbeing. A staff WhatsApp group is much appreciated. Support for pupils, parents and carers is evident through caring staff and a dedicated parent and families support adviser (PFSA). Thoughtful management of funding sustains this role and as a result the whole community feels cared for. There is strong outreach to those families in particular need, which is much appreciated. Parents also value communications from the school, so that they feel involved in school events. They also speak enthusiastically of the Church school ethos and its impact on their children, especially in terms of moral compass.

Pupils have some understanding of the Christian quest for justice. A number can link this with the spreading branches idea in the vision, although not all can explain it. The school eco council has an impressive level of knowledge on this topic and understand their responsibility for God's creation. An example of this was seen in pupils turning off lights in unused areas around the school. Links with schools abroad give pupils knowledge of deprivation, especially in education. As a result, they are active in trying to support a charity that helps this. Pupils have a strong sense of community, and this is evident in their support of local events. Examples include consideration of how older people might feel by taking the choir to sing to them at a coffee morning. This range of activities ensures they understand the idea of Christian responsibility.

RE is well organised throughout the school. Staff involvement in diocesan training strengthens teaching and learning. The subject has clear impact on the lives of the pupils and their personal spirituality. They understand the effect that religion might have on peoples' lives. Further impact is seen through good recall of prior learning. Pupils readily display clear and confident knowledge of Christianity and world faiths. As an example, they easily express an appreciation of the Sikh message of equality before God. They understand how this arises from the Sikh approach to hospitality for all. Pupils show an understanding of religious symbols in explaining their significance. There is good evidence of learning in RE books, and lively classroom displays provide a stimulating environment. When used, verbal and written feedback on work stimulates progress. However, the system is not sufficiently rigorous yet to be certain of how and what pupils are learning in RE. Staff are working on ways of improving this to ensure development of skills in the subject. Most pupils understand Christianity as a living faith and speak about its effect on society. There is an understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world, illustrated in an innovative study of Gospel music.

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

Information			
Inspection date	4 October 2023	URN	123760
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	99
Diocese	Bath & Wells		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Alison Shearer		
Chair	Adam Wilson		
Inspector	Jeremy Hellier	No.	899