

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Chilthorne Domer Church School	
Address	Chilthorne Domer, Yeovil, BA22 8RD
School vision	
<p>Together we Love, we Aim High and we Celebrate!</p> <p>‘Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.’</p> <p>1 Corinthians chapter 13 vs 4-8</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders clearly articulate why biblical teachings on love are appropriate for the context of the school and how this supports their vision. They live out the vision in how they support the school both in strategic decision making and day to day management. • The vision inspires a deeply nurturing culture where wellbeing is a priority. Consequently, people feel loved and accepted for who they are and flourish. • Collective worship is profoundly meaningful with opportunities to participate, reflect and develop personal spirituality. • Effective leadership in religious education (RE) has revitalised the subject, leading to enthusiastic engagement and debate. Consequently, pupils demonstrate a strong depth of understanding, particularly regarding Christianity. • Every pupil is treasured for their uniqueness. This leads to a culture of equity where individual needs are met. The carefully planned support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) means that all flourish. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that robust systems are in place to monitor the effectiveness of this as a Church school and to drive improvements. • Expand on the widely understood values explored in collective worship to embed a shared understanding of spirituality. This is to build on self awareness and empathise with the experiences of others to develop pupils' spiritual capacities. • Enhance opportunities for pupils to learn about a breadth of diverse beliefs and cultures. This is to enrich their understanding of cultures which they may not otherwise encounter in their daily lives. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>Chilthorne Domer is a school where the Christian vision is fully embedded. Committed governors make regular visits which inform strategic decisions. For example, to support building leadership capacity. Monitoring by governors ensures understanding of the effectiveness of the school. However, the robustness of these systems is, at times, variable. Nevertheless, staff and governors</p>	

work together with dedication for the good of the school. Staff ensure that the school community understands the vision. A recent workshop day allowed pupils to work creatively on this in their house groups alongside parents. As a result, the whole school community understands and lives out the vision, enriched by carefully selected values.

The broad curriculum offers opportunities for all to flourish. Whole school themes are used successfully to enhance the school community learning together. Pupils are encouraged to question deeply and reflect thoughtfully, knowing that their opinions are valued. Investing in outdoor play and learning (OPAL) has transformed playtimes and consequently improved behaviour. The positive impact of this is shown by pupils returning to class ready and eager to learn. The school encourages 'children to be children,' as explained by a parent. Pupils delight in simple experiences such as tree climbing and mud modelling, bringing them closer to the wonders of creation. Through the breadth of learning, both inside and outside the classroom, spirituality is intrinsic to the curriculum. For example, the 'discovery shed' provides a haven to appreciate the awe and wonder of nature. Pupils are inspired to join in with a village gardening initiative called 'Skool Beanz.' They grow produce at the allotment and in the school garden. Thus, pupils are further inspired to care about conservation. The school is literally sowing the seeds of spirituality. However, the way pupils express their understanding of spirituality is less developed. This affects the depth in which they can share the impact of the spiritual experiences they encounter.

Bold funding decisions support pupils who have SEND, ensuring equity of provision. This is linked to leaders understanding of the vision which motivates decision making. With appropriate support, those with SEND thrive and are fully integrated. A calm and respectful atmosphere is evident throughout the school. Pupils are taught to be kind and considerate, living this out in caring relationships and excellent behaviour. Inspired by this, older pupils write a letter welcoming the youngest pupils into this loving family atmosphere. The older pupils embrace their role as designated 'guardian angels' and develop empathy and responsibility. These special relationships instil love for one another in line with the vision. Parents appreciate and are rightly reassured by the care taken of their children. Links with the local community are strong. Classes are regularly invited to community events in the village. These interactions are mutually beneficial in developing understanding between various generations. Building community spirit is driven by the vision of expressing love through positive relationships.

Worship is carefully planned to allow for participation, reflection and celebration. Pupils actively engage in reflections. They spontaneously lead prayers which are often shared with the wider community. Daily worship enhances the spiritual development of adults and pupils. However, a shared language for expressing spirituality is still in its initial stages. This limits pupils' ability to express how for example, good deeds are an expression of spirituality. Worship is inclusive with staff sensitively, and effectively, supporting pupils with SEND to participate. The vision's Bible verse is repeated in the words of the school song, reinforcing this for pupils. Strong partnerships with the local church benefit all. Families appreciate the school's invitation to sign up to attend services at both local churches. Pupils are proud to represent their school, wearing their school uniforms and taking an active role in family services. This has a positive impact on them and on the parish congregation who enjoy their involvement. The inter-generational worship is inspiring to people of all ages.

Leaders are deeply mindful of good wellbeing for staff and pupils, linking this to the vision. Staff feel appreciated through, for example, receiving special vouchers to provide wellbeing moments. They are simple but valued gifts such as 'cover for your break duty,' 'a chocolate bar' or 'a later start.' These small acts of love, create a culture where all feel valued, and relationships are strong. As a further example, the behaviour policy is now a relationship policy. Staff focus on redirecting inappropriate behaviour using an emotionally informed approach. Consequently, pupils learn

empathy which shapes, and improves, their actions in line with Christian teachings. Initiatives such as 'Thrive' are successfully implemented to provide additional emotional support. This individualised approach enhances engagement with learning, attendance and opportunities to take part in wider activities. All pupils are supported to have ambition and to 'aim high' in line with the vision.

Pupils are inspired to be agents of change. In addition to fundraising for well-known charities, they initiate support for a locally based charity called 'School in a Bag'. Pupils are actively involved in packing these bags to support school communities abroad. Plans to build links with recipients of 'School in a Bag' to appreciate the impact are at an early stage. Pupils articulate their concerns about global issues such as educational disadvantage and climate change. They challenge ethical choices, such as the environmental impact of releasing balloons. Pupils take responsibility for litter picking, knowing that even small acts make a difference. The impact of the school vision creates a culture where pupils show compassion towards others and care for the environment.

Leaders ensure that the RE curriculum is sequenced, relevant and engaging. The school benefits from support and training through the local diocese. RE is enhanced with a resource called Understanding Christianity. This gives greater depth to pupils' knowledge of the Christian faith. Pupils demonstrate critical engagement with biblical text. Opportunities for deep questions stimulate their understanding. They debate with enthusiasm, and respect one another's opinions. Plans to regularly hold faith days to encounter a range of beliefs are at an early stage. However, opportunities to prepare pupils for understanding the diverse world beyond their immediate locality are currently somewhat limited.

An inspiring display conveys pupils' understanding of the vision. Chilthorne Domer is depicted as 'an umbrella of love.' Staff successfully model biblical principles of Christian love, creating a culture which enhances the lives of all. Parents appreciate how the school both protects and prepares their children to withstand the joys, and storms, of life, in order to thrive.

These inspection findings indicate that Chilthorne Domer Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	7 November 2023	URN	123815
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	144
Diocese	Bath & Wells		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Nichola Chesterton		
Chair	Peter Luscombe		
Inspector	Amanda Brockway	No.	2214