

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Marychurch Church of England Primary and Nursery School	
Address	Hartop Road, St Marychurch, Torquay, TQ1 4QH

School vision
<p>Our school vision and values are at the heart of everything that we do: Love, Peace, Joy and Kindness. They underpin our teaching and learning and provide an environment which prepares our pupils as confident, happy citizens. We want all our children to know that God is with them and will continue to be throughout their lives.</p> <p>Within a school context we believe Nurturing Minds, Fulfilling Lives expresses our core vision for education, and we use the Parable of the Sower to illustrate this.</p> <p>An extension of our vision are our learning attitudes: Creativity, Spirituality, Responsibility and Aspiration.</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders have brought stability to the school, shaping the vision and deepening pupils' understanding of its significance. They use the vision to give clear direction to drive improvements. • The religious education (RE) curriculum is well planned and raises pupils' appreciation of the contribution it makes to their lives. The leaders' enthusiasm effectively grows staff knowledge and skills so that teaching and learning are good. • The vision is instrumental in creating a warm caring community, where pupils show a real understanding of Christian values and how they shape their thinking. As a result, pupils show one another a good degree of dignity and respect. • Partnerships that enrich the school's improvements are shaped by the vision. The relationship with the local Church is a strength, with contributions to worship and pastoral care. The trust's work is significant, raising the quality of initiatives. • The provision to meet pupils' diverse needs is growing and making a difference, so they can flourish. Staff reach out to families in challenging times, offering practical support on their journey through life, nurturing their feelings of being valued.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a systematic approach that evaluates the impact the Christian vision has on all aspects of being a Church school. This should enable all members of the community to contribute to this and result in clearer areas for improvement. • Ensure opportunities for spiritual flourishing are an intrinsic part of the curriculum. Allow pupils to express their thinking in various ways to demonstrate the impact these experiences make. • Extend pupils' understanding of deprivation and injustice so they are equipped to take action that makes a difference on the lives of others.

Inspection findings

Leaders bring stability and calm following a period of change. They effectively use the Christian vision to give clear strategic direction. Links to the Parable of the Sower are emphasised, which enriches pupils' understanding of its everyday significance. Pupils recognise that they are the seed that grows in the rich soil of learning the school provides. This is shown pictorially throughout the community, reinforcing ideas of flourishing and growing talents. Pupils use the language of Christian values, which are well understood, to enable them to see how the vision is lived out. They articulate where they use these values in a range of situations, so their importance is heightened. The significance of the vision is understood across this community. It drives staff to reach out and provide support as families go through challenging times. This makes a real difference, giving strategies to help them in nurturing their children. The vision gives a clear focus to meeting pupils' diverse needs, particularly developing communication skills. Leaders are enthusiastic and committed to their work. They prioritise improvements, raising the impact this Church school makes. School leaders rigorously evaluate, celebrating strengths. New approaches to monitoring involve governors drawn from the community and local schools, bringing expertise and commitment. However, there is a limited approach to evaluating the impact of the vision on all aspects of being a Church school.

The vision draws upon the ideas from the Parable of the Sower, where the seed falls on stony ground and does not flourish. Staff see it as their role to show God's love to all, removing any barriers to learning. This has led to refreshing approaches to meet pupils' diverse needs. Pupils are supported to recognise their emotions, agreeing individualised strategies which help them to be calm. Expertise from other providers informs this effective provision, resulting in pupils' behaviour improving. Leaders raise staff knowledge and skills in meeting different needs, so these are recognised early and interventions put in place. A project to enhance pupils' communication skills is developing effectively, where pupils use starter sentences to organise their thinking. Staff build trusting relationships with families, so they feel valued and supported. Pupils' and staff mental health is prioritised, for example, in the way opportunities for mindfulness and other strategies are integrated into learning. This shows the vision being lived out and making a difference.

Leaders draw on Jesus' example of serving others. They recognise each person as being special to God, enabling them to be the best that they can be. This means providing the best soil in stimulating learning opportunities, so that they can discover and realise their talents. Consequently, the curriculum has been revised, with various visits enriching learning. A culture of high aspirations contributes to this. Pupils enjoy taking leadership responsibilities, such as being an eco-warrior, taking action to care for God's world. Additional activities allow pupils to discover their talents, where success is widely celebrated. Learning behaviours, such as reflection, drawn from the values, enhance pupils' belief in their ability. Recent initiatives enhance the importance of spirituality, where pupils use approaches which help them to organise their thinking. However, opportunities for spiritual flourishing are not fully developed. Pupils show a well-developed understanding of diversity. This is extended by literature texts which explore themes such as refugees, disability or mental health. These stimulate discussions raising greater awareness. Some appreciation of injustice is shown. Pupils take some action to support local causes. At present, pupils are not confident to become independent agents for change.

Both the trust and school prioritise pupils having 'life in all its fullness' in their vision. The trust lives this out through guiding initiatives, sharing good practice and enhancing monitoring. Being part of a hub of schools strengthens subject development and planning, so staff feel part of a wider family. This partnership enables leaders to grow their talents and share their expertise. Relationships and pupils' actions are shaped by the vision and values, creating a culture of equity. These draw upon Jesus' example of how all can live together well. Pupils generally treat one another with dignity and

respect, seeing everyone as special. The importance of forgiveness is well established, so all can move on from mistakes together.

Collective worship makes a significant impact for all, having a central position in daily life. It enables pupils to explore what the vision looks like and the difference it makes. Christian values are explored so pupils realise their relevance in a variety of situations. Time is given for everyone to consider the significance of ideas raised and how each might respond, extending the relevance of worship. It is inclusive and enables each to contribute with integrity. Worship inspires some to take action and make a difference for others. A new pupils' ethos committee contributes to worship, leading some aspects. They have created a toolkit to enhance class worship where their role is developing. The local church makes an impressive contribution to worship. Pupils take an active role in the Eucharist, appreciating its importance for Christians. Clergy support planning and celebration of festivals, enhancing pupils' knowledge. Their pastoral role is greatly valued. Pupils feel prayer helps them to share ideas with God or allow them to be calm. This contributes to their personal spirituality, where their understanding of its relevance is growing. Many pupils value worship, coming together and singing, which they do with enthusiasm.

Leaders' dedication and commitment ensures RE has a high profile. The curriculum effectively deepens pupils' understanding of its relevance, it is well sequenced and challenges pupils' thinking. The RE leaders work well with staff to prepare lesson plans for each unit. This ensures key questions and vocabulary are explored, so pupils know their importance. A good range of visual resources stimulate learning. The use of 'big questions' is developing well, where pupils verbalise ideas and learn from others. These debates shape individual beliefs. Pupils' awareness of core religious concepts is growing. They talk about worldviews thoughtfully. Pupils and families explain their beliefs and how they celebrate festivals, so all appreciate how faith shapes actions. The diocese and trust support through well focused training. This enables resources, such as 'Understanding Christianity', to be implemented effectively. This enhances staff and pupils' knowledge of Christianity. Generally, pupils value RE lessons, perceiving how it challenges their thinking.

Effective ongoing support from the RE leader grows staff confidence and skills. New approaches that have been introduced are arousing pupils' curiosity. As a result, teaching and learning is always at least good. Systems to monitor pupils' progress are secure. These identify how to further support pupils, so that when necessary, there are changes made to planning and the themes covered. Pupils make appropriate progress and flourish. Staff discussions with all pupils enable them to verbalise ideas, showing a greater depth of understanding. This indicates that the progress made by vulnerable pupils in RE is often better than other subjects.

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

Information			
Inspection date	28 November 2023	URN	140644
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	292
Diocese	Exeter		
MAT/Federation	St Christopher's		
Headteacher	Jane Bruten		
Chair	Paul Jones		
Inspector	David Hatrey	No.	844

