

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

St Benedict's Church of England VA Junior School, Glastonbury	
Address	Benedict Street, Glastonbury, BA6 9EX
School vision	
<p>"Life in all its Fullness." (John 10:10)</p> <p>At St Benedict's C of E VA Junior School, our intention is for all our pupils to embrace 'Life in all its fullness' (John 10:10); as such we prioritise our pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education, offering a broad and varied range of learning and life experiences, including visits to art galleries and historical monuments, outdoor activities, after school clubs and opportunities to try a broad range of sports. We celebrate all participation and achievement – whether academic, sporting, performance, creative or community-based - with a strong emphasis on promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. Our values, Community, Kindness and Resilience, underpin this vision and are the cornerstones of our pupils' personal development.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Christian vision drives the school's work to address the diverse needs of families, so all feel valued. Pupils play an active role in the town, growing their sense of community.</li> <li>• Leaders make bold decisions which lead to improvements in meeting pupils' unique needs. These make a real difference for some pupils, giving them a new start, changing lives and attitudes.</li> <li>• The vision creates a warm caring school family where all are welcome and special. This shapes behaviours and actions, so pupils show one another a high degree of dignity and respect.</li> <li>• Religious education (RE) is a strength of the school, due to the drive of the leadership. New initiatives deepen pupils' thinking and understanding, shaping their beliefs.</li> <li>• The relationship with the local church is very significant, notably through the valuable support they give to governance. They offer a variety of experiences in worship which are valued and enrich pupils' reflections and contribute to their personal spirituality.</li> </ul>	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure opportunities for pupils' spiritual flourishing are identified in the curriculum.</li> <li>• Extend opportunities to explore injustice to enable pupils to become independent agents for change.</li> <li>• Create a systematic approach to evaluating the impact that the Christian vision has on all aspects of being a Church school, to allow ongoing foci for improvements.</li> </ul>	
Inspection findings	
<p>The vision is deeply embedded in daily life and is understood by all, giving clear direction for improvements. Pupils articulate a thoughtful understanding of the vision, giving a variety of instances where it makes a difference. They explain that it, 'changes their mindset' or 'makes your life full of new possibilities'. Staff weave Christian values, linked to the vision into learning. This</p>	

allows pupils to use the accessible language of values throughout the day. Pupils, of all faiths, confidently articulate the difference values make to their lives. There are fine examples where pupils develop resilience to learning and persevering when challenges make them think. The vision addresses the needs of the community. Staff go beyond parental expectations to 'walk alongside' families offering support. Through trusting relationships, they show God's love in challenging times, notably in establishing a food pantry. There is nurture for pupils and adults' mental health and wellbeing. All understand approaches which help them, creating a calm learning environment. This is an impressive feature of the school's work. Leaders use Jesus' words to shape the school's direction, leading by example. This culminates in new initiatives which focus on meeting pupils' diverse needs. For instance, dedicated spaces are established which offer support for specific needs. Staff are committed to the vision and live it out. Their talents are grown which makes them feel valued and ready to take on roles of greater responsibility. Governors are an integral part of the team, ensuring initiatives reflect the vision. Monitoring has led to improvements, such as raising the impact of class reflection spaces. However, there is no systematic plan to monitor all aspects of being a Church school. For example, they are not aware of the impact curriculum experiences have on pupils' spiritual growth.

Leaders draw on Jesus' example of reaching out to those facing challenges on the 'journey of life', bringing hope. Bold financial decisions prioritise actions to address pupils' needs. This is seen in the creation of the 'Beehive' and other spaces dedicated for nurture. Care given to pupils at the start of the day has impacted positively on attendance. The provision for those with special educational needs or a disability (SEND) enables them to flourish. Staff knowledge of specific needs leads to these being identified early and support put in place. Through the vision everyone is seen as being valued. This gives some pupils a fresh start, after previous difficulties, changing attitudes and lives. Staff are continuously 'up skilled' to address needs, drawing on expertise beyond the school. The vision is clear within interactions in school. Positive mental health has a high priority for staff and pupils. Pupils are guided in recognising and managing their emotions, with personal strategies identified. This helps them to be calm. Pupil 'wellbeing champions' in each class, create an environment where pupils actively nurture each other. Their creation of Advent calendars gave thoughtful examples of strategies to remain composed in this busy time. Staff use curriculum opportunities for reflection and spirituality as these arise. At present, these experiences are not clearly identified in the curriculum or fully developed. Pupils are not confident to express their thinking about spiritual moments or show the impact that these have on their lives.

Collective worship plays a major role in deepening pupils' understanding of what the vision looks like in daily life. Ongoing improvements ensure it is relevant and challenges thinking. For instance, 'big questions' posed at the start of each week, prompt pupils to reflect on these. This stimulates discussions in class worship, extending the importance of these ideas and how each can respond. Pupils nominate peers who live out the values, so all appreciate the impact of these on school life. Planning is closely linked to exploring the vision, so that pupils understand its relevance to their lives. Pupils' personal spirituality is effectively promoted through the day. Times of reflection in worship and in the class dedicated spaces enable pupils to speak to God or be calm. Lunch time 'Thanks', and open-ended questions, promote discussions often linked to collective worship. This is enhanced by pupils planning and leading worship on themes they feel are important. Within these they suggest their own 'big questions'. The school's relationship with the church enriches worship and is a strength. Workshops, led by the church, extend pupils' understanding of the main Christian festivals and their importance for Christians. Governors from the church are enthusiastic in supporting and challenging the school. Pupils sing enthusiastically. They feel that worship and learning about the values is a valuable part of the day. It helps inform their personal choices and decision making leading to a happy school environment.

Leaders draw on Jesus' teachings to shape this caring community, where all are valued. Pupils

articulate that each person is treated differently, because all are unique and each needs different support. Relationships are important, pupils learn how to overcome mistakes and move on together. The vast majority treat one another with a high level of dignity and respect. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school. Through a variety of projects, the school contributes to the life of the town. Creating raised beds to bring colour, working with the local care home and supporting the food pantry are fine examples. Pupils are enthusiastic to care for God's world, creating habitats for wildlife and saving energy. Projects involving pupils becoming 'mini police' see them active in the locality. However, they are less confident to act independently to become agents for change.

RE is a strength of the school. Subject leadership brings a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm. New initiatives enhance the impact it makes, effectively engaging pupils. For example, pupils are encouraged to make links with previous learning and apply these ideas to other RE work. All staff now teach RE, growing their knowledge and skills. As a result, teaching is at least good and there are examples of high-quality practice. Assessment approaches are being refined, so it is clear what pupils understand. This leads to further support being put in place enabling pupils to achieve the expected level. The majority of pupils make good progress. A new RE curriculum is established that is broad and balanced, enabling ideas to be progressively developed. A wide range of worldviews are explored allowing pupils to perceive how belief influences actions. Key religious vocabulary is consistently developed, deepening pupils' understanding of its significance. The use of 'big questions' spark lively debates where opinions are challenged. Pupils listen to other's ideas and refine their beliefs. Their understanding of core religious concepts and Christianity as a living faith are growing. Diocesan expertise is drawn upon, notably through focused training. Pupils recognise the importance of the subject and its relevance to their thinking.

The inspection findings indicate that St. Benedict's Church of England Junior is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	10 January 2024	URN	123833
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	206
Diocese	Bath & Wells		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Piers Ranger		
Chair	Helen Roper and Jo Boughen-Hunt		
Inspector	David Hatrey	No.	844