

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Stephen's Church of England Primary School, Lansdown

Vision

St Stephen's Church Primary School's vision is built on four core values: love, courage, creativity, and joy. These values ensure we feel cared for, confident, and able to learn daily, fostering future success. Our values are evident in all relationships within our school community, creating a family atmosphere of warmth, fun, and nurture. Inspired by the parable of 'The Hidden Treasure' (Matthew 13:44), our vision emphasises that our values are inherent within us. We already have everything within to, 'let our hidden treasure shine'.

Strengths

- The Christian vision and values of the school, underpinned by the vision of Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust (MAT), are a living reality. They result in the core values of love, joy, courage and creativity being drivers of various aspects of school life and development.
- Pupils and adults treat each other with exceptional care and kindness, motivated by recognising the hidden treasure of every person. This means difference is celebrated and relationships at all levels reflect the core value of love.
- The vision has driven the development of a broad and exciting curriculum, maintaining high aspirations for pupils and ensuring rich character development. This includes a wealth of opportunities for spiritual development which lead to deep thinking and spiritual flourishing.
- Collective worship reflects the powerful relationships that lie between pupils, staff and the wider community. It contributes significantly to the spiritual flourishing of both pupils and adults and is central to the life of the school.

Development Points

- Ensure the RE curriculum includes diverse religions and worldviews. This is so pupils develop knowledge of a range of worldviews and understand Christianity as a diverse, global faith.
- Improve the use of assessment in RE. This is to ensure pupils make progress in their knowledge and skills over time.



Inspection Findings

St Stephen's School is driven and inspired by its Christian vision based on the parable of 'The Hidden Treasure' (Matthew 13). The community knows and embraces this vision, which drives decision making at all levels. Core values of love, joy, courage and creativity lead to a joyful and aspirational learning environment and community. For example, pupils express how much they appreciate their school library as an imaginative and welcoming place for reading. The MAT vision of 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10) seamlessly complements the priorities of the school. It echoes the importance of going above and beyond for full flourishing of the whole community. MAT leaders clearly balance strategic development priorities with guidance on core elements of Christian character such as wellbeing, spirituality and diversity. The inspirational school leadership team are driven by the vision to create a powerful culture of nurture and support. Local governors are proud of the school. They hold vision at the heart of all activity and conversation to give support and challenge and ensure impact is maintained.

The school vision firmly inspires the curriculum and has undergone considerable development and improvement. This is demonstrated in the excellent outcomes for pupils and the rich, broad curriculum offer. Pupils enjoy exciting enrichment opportunities, such as forest school, residential visits and creative workshops. At all ages, they talk about how much they enjoy their learning. Provision includes careful, compassionate support for pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The desire for everyone to access their God given 'hidden treasure' is also reflected in school and MAT processes for staff professional development. This results in staff identifying their unique skills and receiving the support to develop and improve as is appropriate for them. The school community exhibits an embedded spiritual approach across strategic and classroom life. Pupils have varied opportunities to develop spiritually in curricular and extra-curricular activities. For example, as a response to parent feedback the school has broadened creative and sporting clubs on offer. These allow pupils to be still or active, reflective or social and tap into their 'hidden treasure'. Clear shared language is being developed around spirituality, using the concept of 'windows, mirrors and doors'. This offers the chance for personal reflection inwards (mirrors), out to the world around us (doors) and to consider deeper meanings in life. This tool helps adults to explain concepts to pupils clearly and encourages them to think deeply.

Collective worship is a well-loved daily focus point for community gathering. Worship is inclusive and offers opportunities for all to access moments of spirituality and participate at their chosen level. It inspires pupils by exploring issues of injustice and responsibility and identifying the 'hidden treasure' of people who work for justice. Pupils express how much it helps them by giving them a time of calm and personal reflection. 'Worship ambassadors' are trusted with the responsibility to independently lead worship, with close support and training from the headteacher and the rector of St Stephen's Church. This includes careful reflection on the strengths and learning points of each session. As a result, pupils grow in confidence and spiritual understanding. Staff reflect on times when collective worship positively impacts their day, week, or life. Partnership with the church team is grounded in the school core values of love and joy. This results in pupils, staff and parents feeling nourished and inspired by both regular and seasonal community worship events. Pupils and staff express the joy weekly church-led collective worship brings them and value their close relationship with the rector. The church community is well represented on the local governing board and members of the community enjoy working with the school in various ways. This leads to the Christian vision maintaining a central position in strategic decisions and governors describing an element of spirituality in their work.

There is a profound sense of connection and wellbeing at the heart of St Stephen's. The value of love underpins relationships and the vision of 'Hidden Treasure' leads to great value being placed on individuality. As a result, staff describe working here as being part of a 'family' and feel known and supported. Parents value knowing that their children are loved, both in their most positive or most difficult moments. The 'snug' space and restorative,



nurture-based approach to behaviour means pupils are supported to be themselves and learn to manage emotions. Families of pupils with SEND rightly reflect upon the ways the school goes over and above to help their children to succeed. Furthermore, they teach pupils how to understand and support their peers. New outdoor play facilities support pupil wellbeing through a wide variety of activities to suit different preferences and needs. This means children and adults flourish and find joy in their time both in class and in play.

Pupils at St Stephen's have many opportunities to explore issues of justice and responsibility. They have a passion for social justice and speak up with confidence reflecting the core value of courage. Impactful partnerships exist between school and parents and reflect a socially conscious community. The 'grow a fiver' project is a living example of courageous advocacy, challenging pupils to multiply five pounds through entrepreneurial events and activities. Pupils speak with pride about this event, the funds they raised for school, and how much they learned as a result. In Year 6, all pupils receive the opportunity to be a pupil leader. Consequently, they feel empowered and talk about the responsibility of being a role model for their younger peers. The school, church and MAT share a commitment to 'diversity and inclusion celebrated'. For example, books and resources are carefully chosen to ensure pupils of varied backgrounds and characteristics are represented in resources. Pupils speak passionately about the importance of being kind and considerate to everyone and celebrating difference at St Stephen's.

RE has good profile and priority in this school and is valued by leaders, teachers, parents and pupils. Pupils are often well-engaged through creative lessons and activities. They demonstrate good knowledge of key concepts in Christianity. They do not experience a variety of representations of Christian worldviews and as such lack understanding of the diverse and global nature of this faith community. The subject leader has successfully supported the development of greater challenge in RE after monitoring identified this as an area for improvement. As a result, pupils now ask 'bigger' questions and think deeply in RE. The MAT facilitates an RE teacher network and has a structured system for church school development. The subject leader has recently introduced a new assessment approach for RE, inspired by discussion at this network. Teachers now use discussion books to talk to all pupils across the year, about their learning in order to check progress. Pupils enjoy opportunities to learn about different religions and worldviews, such as Hindu and Jewish practices, particularly through artistic and practical activities. They are sometimes unable to consistently remember or talk about what they have learned about these worldviews. This suggests some elements of the curriculum have not been learned by all pupils effectively, and new assessment processes are not yet having full impact.

Information

Address	Richmond Place, Lansdown, Bath BA1 5PZ		
Date	17 th October 2024	URN	145517
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	351
Diocese/District	Bath and Wells		
MAT/Federation	Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust (BWMAT)		
Headteacher	Claire Taylor		
Chair of Governors	Gemma Grierson		
Inspector	Laura Harris		