

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John's Church of England Primary School

Vision

Sharing Joy and Hope in the Community

At St John's our vision is rooted in our firm belief that we are a community where all members are respected, cherished and valued. Our mission is to provide a safe environment in which children can learn, make mistakes and develop their confidence and understanding of the world around them in order to flourish, whilst being supported by the whole community.

The parable of the two builders (Matthew 7:24-29)

When a person builds their life on Jesus' words, they are building a strong foundation, and that person will be strong inside.

Strengths

- The Christian vision has been designed to serve the needs of the school and is enabling pupils to thrive. Adults and pupils are encouraged to be the best that they can be.
- The carefully constructed curriculum supports the school's rounded approach to education. Pupils are enabled to access the curriculum and have opportunities to achieve.
- Leaders' attention to supporting wellbeing and good mental health for pupils and adults is exemplary. Care extends beyond the immediate school environment to families and the local neighbourhood.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum is ordered and sequential. Its breadth of content supports pupils to understand Christianity as a diverse, global living faith.

Development Points

- Develop a shared understanding of spirituality. Using agreed language, weave intended opportunities for pupils to develop personal spirituality into the whole school curriculum planning.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision, expressed through the school's chosen Christian values, is the life blood of the school. It underpins leaders' decisions and enables pupils and adults to thrive. The parable that Jesus told of the two builders is well known across the school, and pupils refer to it in their everyday lives. They agree that by building their lives on 'rock' they will become good people. Understanding that all are created in the image of God, leaders' care extends to everyone within the community. Staff, pupils and parents agree that being the best that they can be is a central aim of the school. As a result, they feel respected, cherished and valued. Governors know their school and monitor it as a church school. The school's vision is not just words, but actions. It inspires pupils and adults to work together as a strong community and to embrace their multiculturalism as a strength. It is a happy school. Joy and hope are seen both in stunning wall displays and in the caring behaviour of pupils and staff.

The school curriculum is shaped by the Christian vision. A rounded education inspires academic, emotional, physical and spiritual learning. This supports pupils in becoming personally fulfilled and prepares them for life. A variety of learning opportunities including outdoor learning, visits and trips build pupil confidence. The curriculum is carefully designed so that pupils can achieve whatever their ability. A range of closely monitored interventions support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In line with the vision, leaders commit to a high level of staffing to support inclusion. An emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) supports pupils with challenging mental health to access their learning. Extra-curricular provision is varied and popular. It supports breadth in learning, for example, through music and gardening. The school offers nurturing support to families in the provision of daily wrap around care.

The Christian vision drives the school's policies and practice which ensures that the community lives together well. Tolerance and respect for people, whatever their beliefs, ethnic group, abilities or challenges, is key to school life. The wellbeing of pupils and staff is paramount to leaders who aim to ensure that no one feels left out and there is a warm and caring atmosphere. Staff workload is monitored and supported. They appreciate and value a 'wellbeing day' which is given each year to support their mental health. Pupils are educated in a supportive learning environment where individuals are known and understood. They dare to take risks with their learning and 'be wrong' in the safe knowledge that they will not be judged. This is also a THRIVE school supporting mental health and emotional wellbeing in children. As a result, pupils feel that they always have someone they can talk to. In times of difficulty, parents know that support of all kinds is available from the school. This creates an environment where pupils and adults are known and cherished.

Daily collective worship is central to the life of the school. It is inclusive and invitational. Pupils and staff enjoy coming together for this special time of day. Carefully planned around the school's Christian vision and values, and including church festivals, it inspires pupils to become better people. Pupils love to hear the Bible stories and to learn about Jesus. This results in pupils 'feeling nearer to Jesus and wanting to find out more about him.' Worship is varied involving a range of leaders including the local vicar. It always includes an invitation to stillness, prayer and reflection enhancing spiritual development. The prayer life of the school is full and invitational, particularly providing opportunities to give thanks. The school chaplain leads workshops in praying in different ways, for example through creative arts. Pupils place their own written prayers in a prayer bowl as one way of communicating with God. Weekly celebration worship acknowledges both attainment and achievement at school and at home. Pupils enjoy sharing the joy of each other's successes. The school's partnership with the parish church is strong. Visits to the church for worship at Christian festivals are shared with parents and parishioners who value this time to come together. There are many opportunities daily for spiritual flourishing. Moments of awe and wonder abound. Seeing a barn owl in flight whilst on a residential camp or playing in reflected, coloured light from the school's stained-glass window, demonstrate this. On seeing the first frost of



the season, a pupil remarked that God had decorated the playground. However, there is no shared definition of spirituality, and this restricts understanding and conversation about it.

From the vision come the school's five Christian values of respect, compassion, friendship, service and endurance. These form a 'golden thread' which creates an active culture of justice and responsibility in school. Pupils respect and care for everyone in their community and are encouraged to consider the impact of their actions. They are elected to take positions of responsibility such as school councillors and pupil chaplains. Pupil chaplains model school values and support the delivery of worship, inspiring fellow pupils to social action. Recognising unfairness and need close to home and further afield, pupils are active in their school and local community. They raise money for local and national charities as well as visiting a nursing home and participating in town events. The school council lead fundraising to support a struggling school in Burundi. This reinforces pupil awareness of global need and how they can help.

RE is placed prominently at the heart of the school curriculum. It is enjoyed by pupils and motivates and inspires them. A safe environment in classrooms enables pupils to discuss and debate, whilst exploring the content of the curriculum more deeply. Pupils are curious and the well-constructed, sequential and well-balanced RE curriculum answers many of their questions and supports their learning. As a result, pupils are respectful of people's beliefs and recognise Christianity as a global and living faith. The subject is well-resourced, and the school's multi-faith community also enjoys learning from each other. Learning is enhanced by trips to places of worship including a baptism in the local Baptist church. Governors monitor progress in RE and the Statement of Entitlement is met.

The quality of religious education across the school is good. The RE lead ensures that all teachers receive regular professional development and are knowledgeable about the subject. This supports high-quality learning opportunities for pupils. The diocese and local RE hub both support the school with training. Teaching is regularly monitored and is good, though not always innovative. However, Key Stage 1 pupils enjoy learning Bible stories through enacting them in Godly Play. Assessment is in place and informs teaching and learning. This, and appropriately differentiated and challenging planning, ensure all pupils can participate and make progress. RE displays support learning and inspire pupils to think about bigger problems and world issues. In their learning, pupils are confident and are encouraged to ask questions. For example, a Year 5 pupil asked, 'How did Jesus walk on water?' After consideration, his friend suggested that God held him there.

Information

Address	Priory, Wellington, Somerset. TA21 9EJ		
Date	25.9.24	URN	123900
Type of school	Maintained Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	213
Diocese	Bath and Wells		
Headteacher	Olly Priestly		
Chair of Governors	Brian King		
Inspector	Alison Appleyard		