

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Frome St John's Church of England VA First School	
Address	Christchurch Street East, Frome, BA11 1QG
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Good

School's vision
<p>'Together, we give our children the roots to grow and wings to fly.'</p> <p>Our vision is based around the elements of the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13: 1-23. For seeds to grow, they need firm and strong roots. Like birds who nest in trees, the St John's community aim to nurture their young, who then go on to fly out into the world and flourish.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A distinctive Christian vision is clearly lived by the whole school community. This is evident in the shaping of the curriculum and in pastoral care ensuring the flourishing of pupils and adults alike. • Leadership and governance is enthusiastic and committed to ensuring the impact of the vision. However, current new governors have limited understanding of strategic development as a church school. • Collective worship is well planned and organised, both expressing and supporting the vision. This has clear impact on the pupils, but they have limited opportunities to be involved in planning and leadership. • The vision drives a clear definition of spirituality, and this is evident in pupils' understanding of religion and worldviews. However, rich opportunities for spiritual development in all subject areas are not formally identified. • Religious education (RE) is strong and has significant effect in delivering the vision to pupils. They speak readily and confidently about their learning and the impact of the subject on their lives.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange the church school distinctiveness training and support required for many new governors. This is essential for a church school under new leadership to ensure rapid strategic development . • Formally identify rich opportunities for promoting spiritual development in all subject areas. This is in order to show pupils that spirituality pervades all areas of life. • Develop greater pupil involvement in planning and leading collective to strengthen engagement with this activity and enhance its impact.



Inspection findings

A committed interim headteacher, acting deputy, and a small group of governors enthusiastically promote a distinctive Christian vision well supported by biblical teaching. They understand the vision as giving the pupils 'roots to grow and wings to fly' based on a story of Jesus. It has an immediately positive impact on all their relationships. They understand that, as this is derived from the teaching of the Bible, it is a possible guide for living. The school has a strong sense of community driven by the vision. This ensures the flourishing of pupils and adults alike who describe being in school as 'like receiving a big hug'. There are supportive partnerships between the school, parents, and the church. Pupils relate their activities to the vision and values, and speak confidently about their impact on their lives. The school is in the Frome Learning Partnership with various other schools in the area. This provides mutual support in spiritual, academic, and practical matters and sustains and encourages the school leadership. The school is short of governors, but foundation governors monitor the school vision and its impact. Visit reports on the impact of the vision are considered at meetings driving future improvement. A number of new governors have not received training in church school distinctiveness. The school has a close relationship with the diocese making effective use of support and training. Recent changes in governance and leadership mean that strategic development as a church school is not entirely clear.

The Christian vision is lived through comprehensive care in educating and supporting all pupils. There is good provision for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) which is appreciated by parents. As a result pupils speak very confidently about their learning and with enthusiasm for all they have studied. Parents appreciate the communications from the school, and the approachability of staff. In particular, the system of an adult greeting every child and parent in the morning, and noting any issue is highly valued. This is a strong feature of pastoral care and leads to a sense that every pupil is deeply valued, with needs appropriately met. A well-developed system for using additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is evident in help with educational trips. There is a broad curriculum and a recently formulated definition of spirituality. Opportunities are taken to encourage spiritual development, but these are not currently documented in subject teaching plans. Pupils reflect well on their learning, and realise the application of the vision and values to their lives. The vision also ensures the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school community is prioritised. As a result, adults and pupils indicate they feel cared for and supported.


Pupils steadily realise their potential in various ways. They react positively to reflective moments in lessons, and informally in personal interaction. They broaden their horizons with encouragement from dedicated teaching staff. Pupils understand the teaching of Jesus promotes human flourishing. They realise his example may help them and others achieve the same through their knowledge of biblical stories. Pupils have some understanding of themselves as agents of change. They have a sense of the importance of justice for the whole global community. Participation in a variety of activities such as an anti-bullying week and 'Black Lives Matter' events demonstrates this. Some pupils know that the example of Jesus seeking justice for all God's people motivates this. They also understand global issues around climate change and have a concern for this. Members of the school council are articulate and enthusiastic in working together. They understand how the vision and values may help them resolve differences of opinion and show dignity and respect to each other. This is also highly evident in all pupil behaviour around the school. The Christian ideal of love and forgiveness is modelled in every way and ensures the flourishing of the whole school



community.

Collective worship is delivered daily to the whole school. It is clearly and carefully invitational and inclusive, and pupils respond well to moments of reflection. Pupils can also point to moments where they have been inspired to action by collective worship, particularly around matters of personal behaviour. There is some understanding of prayer but limited appreciation of its importance. Pupils write their own prayers for use on special occasions in church, and a number speak enthusiastically about delivering them using the microphone in the pulpit. The relationship with the church is particularly strong. Pupils have a real sense of ownership of the building. It is open every day and pupils and their parents often drop in for moments of reflection. As a result there is an easy familiarity with the building which has a significant impact on spiritual development. The vicar is active in the school and encourages the school to think of the church building as an extension of itself. Pupils use simple formal responses in worship and are familiar with the Christian symbols. They understand the effective use of these things to focus their spiritual thoughts. Visits to church take place on the special occasions of the church year. This ensures pupils and adults understand the significance of the great Christian festivals and their impact on the world. Bible verses are considered in every act of collective worship, and there is an understanding of Anglican practice. The vision is strongly linked and featured in every act of collective worship. Pupils participate in collective worship to some extent, but opportunities for involvement in planning and leading are few.

Religious education has a subject leader who resources other staff. Involvement in diocesan training supports their teaching and ensures good practice. RE is very well planned and delivered using a variety of resources including 'Understanding Christianity'. Pupils express considerable appreciation of their lessons and look forward to them. Their knowledge and understanding is impressive and confident covering a range of religions and worldviews. They also show a thorough and imaginative understanding of God as three in one and readily discuss their understanding of this. Pupils flourish well in the subject in line with the vision. Brief comments in their books help them see how their work is developing, and teachers have a clear record of each pupil's progress. Understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith is a particularly strong feature through links with a school in India. Mutual visits take place and there is a sharing of RE teaching practice between the schools. Pupils and adults value this link as giving them a wider view of the Christian faith and appreciating difference and diversity. Pupils confidently explain that RE is important to understand one another in today's world.

	The effectiveness of RE is		Good	
	<p>RE shows good practice in every respect . Planning is well organised and there is a broad, rich and engaging curriculum. Effective tracking of individuals shows very clear pupil progress, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their depth of knowledge, seen in their work, enhances their spiritual understanding of the world. Quality features include the ability of pupils to give confident and articulate age-appropriate accounts of Christianity and worldviews.</p>			
Information				
School	Frome St John's Church of England VA First School	Inspection date	30 January 2023	
URN	123843	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	
Diocese/District	Bath & Wells	Pupils on roll	234	
Acting Interim Headteacher	Jo Greathead			
Chair of Governors	Claire Levene Plumb			
Inspector	Jeremy Hellier	No.	899	