



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Stephen's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Address Lansdown Road, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 1XD

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**

School's vision

'Learning to change the world.'

This is drawn from:

Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God...Micah 6 verse 8

Key findings

- The Christian vision completely drives and shapes the school's ambitious curriculum. This provides pupils with the ability to become change makers with a well-developed understanding of difference and diversity. Opportunities for spiritual development are growing, but the school has no shared definition of spirituality.
- Leaders are totally committed to the vision and providing the highest quality of education. They share their substantial expertise with other schools, so they can improve their provision. However, monitoring is not always systematically undertaken to enable a fuller evaluation all aspects of being a church school.
- The vision significantly influences pupils' behaviour and attitudes so they show dignity and respect. Increasing numbers of pupils are confident to become advocates for change.
- The vision ensures that collective worship and religious education (RE) have a high profile, enriching pupils' understanding of Jesus as a change maker. At present assessments in RE lack rigor and do not always enable pupils to determine what progress they are making.
- Pastoral support systems offer pupils very effective nurture for emotional and mental health needs, so they feel confident to flourish.

Areas for development

- Involve all members of the school community in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the vision. This should lead to ongoing improvements.
- Create robust assessment procedures in RE which determine pupils' progress and identify which areas of study have been developed well and which require further improvement. This will raise pupils' progress.
- Agree a shared definition of spirituality and ensure high quality experiences, which come from a broad range of areas, to deepen pupils' thinking. This will enable pupils to confidently express their thinking in a variety of creative ways.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

As a result of St Stephen's revised vision and curriculum, pupils are enabled to become global citizens of the future. This is leading them to develop the skills and attributes of lifelong learners and change makers. Dedicated leaders bring considerable expertise to provide a high quality of education, enabling pupils and staff to flourish. The vision reflects the needs of local community, so they now have a greater awareness of the world and issues it faces. Leaders show a good understanding of biblical principles underpinning the vision, applying this to decisions they make. They use Jesus' example as a change maker and how he reveals God's model for living. Leaders explain how God gave us the world and everyone's responsibility to care for it. These ideas shape the curriculum and culture within the school. The quotation from Micah offers three values which pupils use to guide actions for improvement and shape relationships. The vision is inclusive, recognising that everyone has different beliefs, so all see the vision as meaningful to them. Leaders shape a strong cohesive team who are committed to the vision. Staff are valued, with opportunities to grow talents, enabling them to flourish and take on greater responsibilities as leaders. Their role is living out the vision, creating a culture of care and respect.

Leaders use the vision to shape an ambitious curriculum which deepens pupils' understanding of injustice and inequality. Pupils explore national and global situations, recognising where injustice has a profound affect. This significantly deepens pupils' understanding of difference and disadvantage. Christian values are woven across learning. For instance, pupils talk about injustice, enabling them to make links to biblical stories. The use of key questions such as, 'what does ethics have to do with clothes?' extends pupils' knowledge of child exploitation and inequality. Staff model how they can respond to these issues, so pupils can become change makers. A good example of this saw pupils make soup for the homeless. This gives pupils strategies to use as they increasingly champion causes important to them and learn to become courageous advocates. Pupils' thinking is challenged by debates, refining their understanding. As a result, their knowledge of difference, diversity and gender equality is well developed. Raising pupils' aspirations is an integral part of this. This is enhanced by studying young people who make global changes, so pupils are increasingly confident to tackle more challenging questions. The vision has fostered more opportunities for pupils to reflect spiritually, where they respond thoughtfully. However, there is no shared definition of spirituality, so pupils do not explore a broad range of experiences.

The vision informs partnerships leading the school to help others change and improve. This led the school to respond to the local authority's (LA) request for the headteacher to temporary lead other schools who were in challenging times. Leaders support new headteachers and work with other church schools developing their vision, promoting the flourishing of all. The importance and uniqueness of each individual is part of the vision and ensures their needs are met. Leaders support the LA in monitoring the provision for vulnerable pupils, sharing and enriching the school's practice. This leads to vulnerable pupils being effectively supported, frequently making better progress than peers and raising self-belief. In order for pupils to flourish leaders make bold decisions in identifying outstanding practice. Developing oracy has enhanced pupils' listening skills and their confidence to express ideas.

Relationships with the church are strong. Celebrations at church, deepen pupils' understanding of Christian festivals. Through this pupils have a good awareness of the significance of baptism, confirmation, marriage and death for Christians. The Diocese is supportive, notably through offering focused training, which staff are applying effectively to raise the quality of teaching. Substantial changes have hindered governors in their monitoring and evaluations of the school's Christian distinctiveness. However, this is now improving and they are becoming more aware of strengths and areas to develop.

The vision makes a decisive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. This results in a culture which reflect the school's key biblical verse. Pupils behave well and show dignity and respect. Pupils know the importance of forgiveness and how

this creates a nurturing community. Pupils are enthusiastic to take on additional responsibilities. A skilled pastoral support team is quick to identify emotional needs, providing effective individualised support, enabling pupils to flourish. Mental health and wellbeing have a high profile, providing pupils with valuable strategies that help them to be calm. This was especially evident during the pandemic when the school was effective in providing strategies which supported pupils' emotional and mental health needs.

Through the effective teaching of RE, pupils are enabled to develop their theological and philosophical knowledge and thinking. A recent focus on exploring religious concepts means that pupils are now more confident in their understanding of Christianity. The quality of their work on world faiths has been recognised through a Diocesan award. Lessons are varied and engaging, so pupils enjoy the subject. The use of big questions challenges pupils' thinking and enables them to debate and disagree well. Pupils of different faiths talk about their beliefs, strengthening mutual respect. Strategies for assessment are in place, but they lack rigor. This means that pupils can be unsure about the progress they are making. RE is well led and the subject leader shares good practice from other schools. Through this staff are confident and knowledgeable in their teaching.

Collective Worship is an important focus in daily life where all are welcomed and included. Pupils generally enjoy worship and gain awareness of how ideas can shape their actions. Singing in worship is highly anticipated and led by a pastor whose enthusiasm is infectious. This helps to make worship lively and stimulating. Prayer is valued and a reflection area, set up in partnership/guidance with the vicar, enables pupils to reflect and be still. Values ambassadors are active in providing evaluation and feedback to leaders. This informs future planning and further raises the impact and importance of worship. Class based worship is engaging. The new quotations and questions time allows pupils to make thoughtful links with Jesus' life and teaching. They provide opportunities for pupils to reflect, developing their thinking and considering a personal response. Planning for collective worship is well focused. The support given to staff enables them to have growing confidence in its leadership. Through worship, pupils gain an age-appropriate understanding of the Christian idea of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	25 March 2022	URN	109167
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2015		
School status	Voluntary controlled junior school	NOR	340
Name of MAT/Federation	n/a		
Diocese	Bristol		
Headteacher	Louisa Wilson		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	David Hatrey	No.	844