

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Oliver Tomkins Church of England VA Junior School

Vision

'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full' John 10:10.

We live our vision through three words: aspiration, thriving and wellness. This means we focus on facilitating high aspirations for all and aim for all of our community to thrive. We strive for wellness which means that every member of the school community feels valued and respected and that each person is treated fairly and well.

Oliver Tomkins Church of England VA Junior School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The deeply embedded Christian vision, lived out through the three keys of aspiration, thriving and wellness is central to school life. This is supporting adults and pupils within the community to thrive academically, spiritually and emotionally.
- Leaders at all levels live out the Christian vision by promoting a culture of care and encouragement. This helps pupils, including those who are vulnerable and have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), overcome barriers to learning.
- Senior leaders have put pupils' mental health and wellbeing at the heart of their work. The careful consideration of the school environment, supported by highly effective pastoral care is supporting pupils and adults to thrive.
- Collective worship is valued as a special time within the school's day for both pupils and adults. This challenges thinking and inspires pupils to consider how they should act in their daily lives.
- Strong subject leadership in religious education (RE) is driving the school's evolving curriculum. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Development Points

- Ensure that the systems and structures in place to assess the impact of the teaching of RE are fully utilised to improve pupils' progress.
- Deepen pupils' understanding of spirituality through wide opportunities and extend the spiritual language used in school in all areas of the curriculum.



Inspection Findings

The deeply embedded Christian vision, lived out through the three keys of aspiration, thriving, and wellness, is at the heart of the school's work. Leaders use the vision to shape their strategic decisions to enhance learning for pupils and adults. Pupils and staff passionately discuss what the vision and the three keys mean to them, and how they endeavour to live these out. Pupils say, 'it's about living life to the full, trying new things so that when you leave you have lots of experiences to help you'. Governors know the school well and take pride in how it engages with the entire community it serves. Together with leaders, they closely monitor and evaluate the vision's impact and take decisive action if change is needed. Leaders enjoy a range of highly effective relationships including with the Diocese of Bristol Board of Education (DBE). This is supporting leaders to deliver their strategic plans and enable everyone within this school family to thrive.

The strong Christian vision has carefully underpinned leaders' crafting of the curriculum. Leaders have considered what pupils in this inclusive community need to thrive. This informs their decisions about the learning children receive and the experiences staff provide. For example, developing pupils' oracy skills enables them to confidently debate their thoughts and understanding. Leaders live out their aspirations for pupils by ensuring inclusion is central to their plans. Parents appreciate the care, and guidance they receive for their children. Staff plan carefully to ensure pupils with additional needs thrive alongside their peers. Pupils actively explain how the vision impacts their learning by sharing their understanding that 'thriving means doing well.' Opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum are sometimes missed. This limits pupils' ability to flourish fully in their learning.

Collective worship is highly valued within the school day. It allows the whole school community, infant and junior schools, to reflect and rejoice together in worship. Leaders carefully plan collective worship, ensuring that the school's distinctive vision shapes their plans. Adults skilfully model and tell stories which enhances pupils' understanding of the Bible. Pupils enthusiastically engage in discussions, sharing their thoughts and views. They sing joyfully and embrace moments of reflection positively and respectfully. Pupils recall Bible stories and explain how this is supporting their understanding of the Christian story. They use this knowledge to support their behaviours with one another. Pupils enjoy the responsibility of leading aspects of worship and confidently interact with staff whilst doing so. Staff appreciate the time to stop and reflect within their day, which helps them to flourish spiritually. Strong partnerships with local churches enhance worship and provide a breadth of Christian experience for pupils. Classroom reflection spaces offer further opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding through carefully planned questions and resources.

Leaders, guided by the school's vision, have created a culture where adults and pupils are treated well. The school's vision and policies foster a spirit of care and nurture. The range of pastoral provision helps young carers and their families and recognises the school commitment to supporting mental health. Parents speak movingly about how extensively the school helps their whole family. Pupils demonstrate positive behaviours and relationships in both learning and play. The recent decision to allow the two schools to play together has been hugely appreciated by pupils. Older pupils show care and compassion for younger pupils during playtimes. The prayer pod offers opportunities for independent reflection during busy playtimes and aids pupils' wellness. Highly skilled pastoral provision effectively ensures that pupils receive strong support during challenging times. Extended curriculum opportunities embody leaders' determination to assist the most vulnerable in their community. The young carers group demonstrates their commitment to this, valuing every pupil and ensuring that special milestones, such as



birthdays, are celebrated. The recent creation of 'The Nest' provides a unique place that helps the most vulnerable within the school to access learning.

The school's vision actively supports pupil leadership. Pupils proudly serve as members of the school's 'vision in action' group, worship leaders, and librarians. Leaders help pupils develop an understanding of responsibility through initiatives with the local police through the 'mini police' project. Pupils enjoy learning about their growing responsibilities through these programmes. They know that leaders value their views and can talk about how they know that they have been heard. For example, the recent addition of more bins on the playground was in response to pupils' requests. The curriculum inspires them to consider injustice and how they can address it. Partnerships with local community groups, including the food bank, are strong and appreciated by the school community. Pupils value learning from visitors, such as a recent experience with guests from Africa. This supported their understanding of how other Christians live and celebrate. Following this visit, pupils decided to help children in Africa by donating clothes they had outgrown but were still usable. Pupils sending these clothes overseas made them proud of the gifts they could offer others.

RE is highly regarded within the school's curriculum. Leaders have ensured that the RE curriculum offers depth and diversity through the programmes of study that pupils learn. They have worked hard to make changes to the curriculum with assistance from the Diocese to further enhance pupils' learning. Rich experiences help shape these plans and develops pupils' understanding of the world they live in. Pupils value the opportunity to learn from those within their immediate community, including parents, about how they live out their faith. This helps them in knowing the breadth and diversity of different faiths. Pupils demonstrate strong understanding about how RE is supporting them in their lives. Their lively debates demonstrate their understanding of Christianity, world faiths and non-religious worldviews. Leaders and governors are ambitious for pupils in this school and regularly check how teaching is developing pupils' understanding. Staff appreciate advice and guidance from advisors in the Diocese to develop their own subject knowledge.

Teachers plan well-constructed sequences of lessons which enable pupils to gradually build and deepen their knowledge. They have carefully considered what pupils need to be successful in learning and this enables vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND to access learning alongside their peers. Effective use of school systems supports pupils to articulate their understanding and make links with previous learning. For example, they enthusiastically engage with a task that challenges them to debate what is and is not forgivable. They can effectively make links with previous learning as well as demonstrating their ability to disagree well. There are some inconsistencies in the school's approach to assessing pupils' learning. This limits pupils' progress.

Information

Address	Beaumaris Road, Toothill, Swindon SN5 8LW		
Date	9 December 2024	URN	126440
Type of school	Junior School	No. of pupils	201
Diocese/District	Diocese of Bristol		
MAT/Federation	Federation with Oliver Tomkins CofE VA Nursery and Infant School		
Headteacher	Katie Cook		
Chair of Governors	Linda Rankin		
Inspector	Helen Springett		