

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John and St Francis Church School			
Address	Westonzoyland Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 5BP		
Date of inspection	30 January 2019	Status of school	Inspected as a VA Academy within the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust (BWMAT)
Diocese	Bath and Wells Diocese	URN	139338
Overall Judgement			Grade Good
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?			
Additional Judgements			
The impact of collective worship			Grade Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)			Grade Good

School context

St John and St Francis Church school has 414 pupils on roll. The school has a low level of religious and cultural diversity and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below the national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below national averages. The headteacher has been in post since September 2018. An Ofsted inspection in September 2017 judged the school as remaining 'Requires improvement'.

The school's Christian vision

'At St John and St Francis Church School we aim to create lifelong learners who are confident and caring, have wisdom and respect for themselves and others with faith to follow their chosen path.'
'Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres ...' (Corinthians 13)

Key findings

- The strong, purposeful leadership of the headteacher, supported by a committed staff team and governors, promotes a distinctive Christian vision that permeates every aspect of the school's daily life.
- Inclusive, nurturing relationships based on Christian love, faith and hope, provide foundations upon which adults and pupils aspire to achieve their full potential and make the most of their God-given talents.
- Strong, mutually beneficial links with the church and local community, including the Salvation Army, make an important contribution to the school's distinctive character.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) rooted in biblical texts, contribute well in promoting distinctive Christian values and developing pupils' spirituality. However, standards of teaching and learning in RE are less well monitored

Areas for development

- Provide frequent opportunities for pupils to plan, deliver and evaluate acts of worship so that they are able to deepen their understanding of the nature of Christian worship.
- Further develop the monitoring of RE so that senior leaders have a sharper knowledge of the standards of teaching and learning.

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

The school has made considerable progress since the last inspection. The Christian vision and associated Christian values, revisited and agreed by staff, governors, pupils and parents, drive the school's work. One parent summed this up by saying, 'The school has a real sense of community, like an extension to the family, where strong morals and living values build relationships.' Shared projects between younger and older pupils and in interactions between staff and pupils, show this.

The Bath and Wells Trust has had a positive influence in helping leaders improve the school. The resulting links are having a good impact on training and curriculum development. Staff feel valued and respected because their well-being is considered at all levels of decision-making and their morale is high. They benefit from well-targeted professional development, which includes middle leaders thus encouraging the development of future school leaders. Priority is given to the development of collective worship and RE as shown by the newly formed RE leadership team. Good diocesan links guide teachers and governors in living out the Christian vision. Leaders' commitment to continuous improvement, contributing to the school's distinctiveness and improving performance, is clear.

School improvement is driven by the shared Christian vision. This is underpinned by a biblical narrative which the headteacher explains well. He confidently articulates that this underpins learning and support for pupils' and staff wellbeing. Staff live out this Christian vision, providing a supporting and caring environment. Senior leaders and governors have established an effective Church school self-evaluation process. Through regular monitoring visits, governors have a very clear idea of school performance, achievement and the way in which the vision is being lived out. The leadership of the school is supported through strong links with the local churches which provide good opportunities to actively engage with the wider community. As a result, prayer and pastoral links between church and school are effectively interwoven. The governing body has a strong commitment to the school's Christian foundation.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy all that the school offers. They are excited by a broad, creative curriculum enhanced by educational visits and extra-curricular activities. Good quality teaching is targeted to meet all pupils' learning needs. Vulnerable pupils, and those with special needs and/or disabilities are well-supported by emotional learning support assistants (ELSAs) through daily nurture groups. Leaders ensure that financial and human resources are used effectively so that all pupils can flourish and achieve. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Standards of attainment are more recently in line with or above national expectations. Effective reading strategies and smaller teaching groups in upper Key Stage 2 are leading to good progress and raised attainment across the school. Expectations are high. Pupils are eager for challenge, reflecting their positive attitudes to life and learning.

Children are given opportunities to challenge and to be challenged. Parents confirm that their children are extremely happy, excited by their learning and joyful in their relationships. They are confident that this is because every child is valued as unique, and is loved and supported. This exemplifies the school's inclusive Christian vision well.

Pupils' behaviour is influenced by the Christian vision. As a result, the respectful harmony of the school community is welcoming. Pupils feel safe and valued. The 'Flock' behaviour code is based on Christian values. Pupils recognise how these influence their behaviour, attitudes and relationships. All adults prioritise the welfare of pupils and work closely with parents when pupils require extra help and support.

Staff speak of the many ways they feel supported and appreciated, attributing this to the culture of the school's distinctive Christian vision. The positive approach to equality and valuing difference means that everyone in the school family is treated with dignity and respect. Pupils understand what constitutes bullying because leaders encourage pupils to think about their actions on others. Pupils make a clear link between Jesus' teaching, Christian values and their own actions, such as supporting charitable causes. They discuss issues related to injustice and discrimination, challenging stereotypes and identifying ways in which they can 'make a difference'. One pupil wrote to the Prime Minister to call for action in the palm oil crisis and received a positive response. Pupils visit the local hospital, support the local food bank and undertake charity work such as fundraising for the British Heart Foundation.

Worship is at the heart of school life, effectively underpinning and extending the school's well-embedded Christian vision. It is led by staff, clergy, Salvation Army personnel and visitors from other local Christian communities. It is both invitational and inspiring. Careful planning, based on the life and teaching of Jesus, explores Christian values and themes imaginatively. Collective worship begins with the lighting of a candle and

pupils share a Christian greeting which reinforces God's presence. Pupils' attitudes are positive because they feel included and involved. However, the school recognises that at present pupils do not plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship regularly. Through worship experiences in a variety of settings and groupings, pupils develop a mature understanding of the nature of God, including the Trinity. Prayer is important in the life of the school and encourages spiritual development. The value pupils place on this is shown by prominent, interactive class prayer/reflection areas. As one group of pupils said, 'Spending time in prayer helps you reflect, think and move on.' Pupils write their own prayers and include these in pupil-led class-based worship.

Pupils enjoy the well planned RE curriculum, which is rooted in religious and biblical texts. RE contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Use of the diocesan Agreed RE Syllabus ensures pupils have rich learning experiences developing their knowledge of Christianity and other major world faiths. Teachers use questioning effectively and marking and feedback is of a high quality. This deepens pupils' thinking as they are frequently asked to explain or consider why such a belief is expressed. However, the school does not have thorough systems in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in RE.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

The RE leadership team ensure that the subject maintains a high profile and stimulates pupils' interest and enjoyment as well as providing effective support to staff. Good teaching challenges and support pupils' exploration of religious belief and practices. A new age-related assessment and tracking system is in place. It is too early to be able to measure its impact on the progress and attainment for all pupils and whether this is in line with other core subjects.

Headteacher	Duncan Gordon
Inspector's name and number	Susan Jordan 932