

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### West Alvington Church of England Primary School

<b>Address</b>	West Alvington, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 3PP		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	20 June 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Academy inspected as Voluntary Aided Learning Academy Partnership Multi-Academy Trust.
<b>Diocese</b>	Exeter	<b>URN</b>	144070

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Additional Judgements</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
	<b>The effectiveness of religious education (RE)</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

#### School context

West Alvington is a primary school with 33 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. 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. The school joined the Learning Academy Partnership (MAT) in April 2017. An interim executive headteacher took up post in January 2019.

#### The school's Christian vision

Growing and Flourishing Together.

#### Key findings

- The vision of enabling all to flourish, achieve their God-given potential and have life in all its fullness has transformed pupils' attitudes to learning. This vision is still being embedded, but has already been influential in creating a culture of high aspirations, where progress is good.
- Strong partnerships with the Multi-Academy Trust have strengthened the school's Christian distinctiveness enabling very good practice and focused support for vulnerable pupils.
- Worship is invitational and allows all pupils, including those of no religious belief or faith, to contribute with integrity and understand the difference the vision and values make to their lives. At present pupils do not plan or lead worship.
- Leaders are dedicated and passionate about the work of the Church school. However, the curriculum has yet to be fully reviewed in the light of the new vision and there are currently insufficient quality experiences to deepen pupils' understanding of global communities and disadvantage.
- Religious education (RE) has a high profile in the life of the school with new approaches introduced by an enthusiastic subject leader. Pupils relish discussions about big questions of meaning and purpose and this extends their thinking.

#### Areas for development

- Enable pupils to plan, lead and evaluate worship regularly so they develop their skills and understanding and have greater ownership.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to think globally so that they develop a deeper understanding of issues of disadvantage, deprivation and exploitation of the natural world and are inspired to be advocates for change.
- Review the curriculum in the light of the vision so there are more planned experiences to deepen pupils' understanding of diversity.

## **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**

Leaders have used the vision effectively to raise standards by transforming pupils' attitudes to learning and by helping them to believe in their own ability. The vision reflects the local context where some pupils do not have high aspirations. The strategic direction of the school and its everyday life is shaped by the vision. Leaders confidently articulate a secure understanding of biblical principles underpinning the vision. They talk about showing God's love for everyone as each is unique and made in the image of God. Leaders see their mission as enabling pupils to flourish so they can have life in all its fullness. Pupils have a growing understanding of the vision as it is still being embedded. They talk confidently about the associated Christian values and give examples where they make a difference to their lives and thinking.

The partnership with the MAT is fundamental, leading to significant improvements. The MAT has provided skilled leaders and staff at a difficult time in the school's journey. Together they have effectively raised the quality of teaching and learning and improved pupils' progress. Staff receive expert guidance on how to support pupils with particular needs and they draw upon proven research. An impressive example is where staff have worked with recognised experts developing pupils' skills and confidence in writing. Excellent practice from Church schools in the MAT is shared enhancing the provision in RE. Staff feel part of a wider family which provides them with a range of strategies for supporting pupils. Relationships with the local church are strong, with support for worship and interactive workshops deepening pupils' understanding of prayer.

New leaders are passionate and dedicated to the work of a Church school. They have created a skilled, cohesive team who share the vision. Leaders' ongoing evaluations consistently lead to improvements, such as establishing a clear structure for worship. The local ethos team of governors are enthusiastic. They agree aspects to monitor each year, listen to pupils and make informed recommendations for improvement. This led to family worship being introduced which has engaged more pupils.

There is a distinct and tangible culture of aspiration growing amongst pupils which comes from the vision. Staff have very high expectations and they set challenging targets for pupils. Frequent and well-focused feedback to pupils during lessons extends their understanding and transforms attitudes to learning. Staff identify pupils' individual barriers to learning and enable them to overcome these. Pupils and staff use the language of growing and flourishing and being the best they can be. Pupils are skilled at giving feedback to peers which is positive and constructive. This helps them to evaluate their own work. Pupils are increasingly able to identify links between the vision, learning and their own flourishing. As a result, pupils' attainment has risen sharply and progress across Key Stage 2 is very impressive. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is at least good. There is an expectation that vulnerable pupils can do as well as their peers, which they do. Skilled practitioners from across the MAT make personalised interventions for vulnerable pupils which are very effective. There is an agreed understanding of spirituality and a variety of opportunities to reflect. Teachers use an approach which effectively helps pupils organise their thinking. Pupils respond in creative ways such as using art to express ideas and understand the contribution this makes to their thinking.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of dignity and respect because they say that everyone is unique and special. They thoughtfully articulate how actions and words can hurt others. Pupils generally attribute their good behaviour and friendships to the vision and Christian values. There is a strong sense of being a family where older and younger pupils play and work well together, which goes beyond that of being a small school. Pupils value the support and encouragement they receive from peers. Staff and older pupils refer to the values when reinforcing high expectations of behaviour. Pupils have a secure understanding of the importance of forgiveness, moving on and making a fresh start. They know how to disagree well and correct inappropriate actions. There is strong support for staff well-being and mental health so they feel valued. Mindfulness approaches and reflections help pupils to feel calm.

Leaders are creating a curriculum which engages pupils. Pupils from different countries explain how they worship which enhances their peers' understanding of diversity. However, there are insufficient opportunities to develop this effectively. There are opportunities to explore global communities, but these do not deepen pupils' understanding of disadvantage, deprivation or exploitation of the natural world. Some pupils take responsibility to

become advocates for change. They raise awareness of issues and organise fundraising activities. Raising funds for the village defibrillator and endangered wildlife are positive examples.

Worship is invitational and allows pupils of no religious belief or faith to contribute with integrity. Leaders have built upon previous good practice to ensure that worship is meaningful. Planning is detailed, exploring Christian values such as friendship and respect progressively. These values enable pupils to understand what the vision looks like in their community. Pupils have a good knowledge of Bible stories because they are thoughtfully explored in worship. Most pupils have a secure understanding of prayer. Ethos days designed by the MAT bring pupils from different schools together to explore themes and this deepens their understanding of worship. An aspect of prayer is explored which pupils then introduce in school. Some pupils recognise that prayer can be helpful when they are sad or angry. There are opportunities for reflection in worship and in class areas which pupils are finding increasingly valuable. At present pupils do not plan, lead or evaluate worship. Pupils have a growing understanding of the main Christian festivals and their significance for Christians. They have an age-appropriate understanding of the trinitarian nature of God.

High quality teaching in RE deepens pupils' understanding of the importance of the vision. The introduction of big questions is increasingly engaging pupils in discussions about philosophical or theological issues. Pupils relish listening to others and sharing their views, knowing their ideas will be valued. The introduction of Understanding Christianity resources has led to more detailed planning. Christianity is studied in greater depth with pupils confidently talking about key Christian concepts such as salvation. A unit on humanism allows pupils to recognise that all views are important. Experienced leaders have designed assessment strategies which are securely in place. Judgements have been monitored so they are secure.



**The effectiveness of RE is Good.**

Standards in RE are at least good compared with local expectations, with several pupils achieving the higher levels. The subject leader is knowledgeable and dedicated, her enthusiasm contagious. Regular lesson observations and focused individual feedback are helping to raise still further the quality of teaching and learning. New initiatives from identified research are introduced such as the creative use of scrapbooks. Expert knowledge from leaders in the MAT informs practice, for example how to support four year-groups in a class. Teaching and learning is good and there are examples of excellent practice, particularly questioning and planning. There was a strong response from pupils regarding RE, they enjoy learning and are aware that these ideas are relevant to their thinking.

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