THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND EDUCATION OFFICE

The Methodist Church

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Symondsbury Church of England Primary School					
Address	Symondsbury, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6HD				
Date of inspection	23 September 2019	**Status of school**	VA Primary		
Diocese	Salisbury		**URN**	113815	

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

Symondsbury CE School is a primary school with 105 pupils on roll. 85% of pupils come from outside the catchment area. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are a small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The headteacher has been in post for five years. The assistant headteacher, who is also the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, has been in her current post for a year.

The school's Christian vision

You, me, us, everyone – We are a school that believe we have the power to change the world!
'The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.'
(1 Corinthians 12:12)

Key findings

- The distinctively Christian vision is deep-rooted and central to all aspects of the school's work. This is passionately driven by the dynamic Christian leadership of the headteacher.
- The school's global awareness and social action work, which epitomises the vision, is innovative and inspires pupils into action.
- Positive relationships, consistently attributed to the Christian vision, are mutually supportive and a key strength of the school.
- Pupils are given structured opportunities for their own spiritual development supporting their understanding of the Christian vision. There is limited freedom for spontaneous, personal reflection and prayer, which limits progress in this area.
- Religious education (RE) is given an increasingly high profile in the curriculum. Assessment is not yet sufficiently robust to effectively inform planning and teaching in the subject.

Areas for development

- Establish a shared understanding of spirituality so that opportunities for reflection, both strategically planned and child-initiated, become well established, promoting good spiritual development.
- Further develop pupils' understanding of the purpose of prayer to enable them, if they choose, to engage in personal and informal prayer as an expression of the vision.
- Ensure that assessment in RE reflects the vision through being consistent and robust so that it effectively informs next steps in teaching and learning.

© The National Society (Church of England and Church in Wales) for the Promotion of Education 2018 // Updated September 2018

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 Christian vision, securely rooted in theology, is pivotal to everyday life at Symondsbury School. A governor described it as 'the truth of our school, not just the wrapping'. This has been shaped and developed by all members of the school community and is driven by the ardent leadership of the headteacher. The school's visual representation of its vision reflects the context of the school and uses the local Colmers Hill within the narrative behind it. This powerful image symbolises the school's outward looking approach into the community and the world. The headteacher, personally, has high aspirations for all pupils at the school. She is unswerving in her determination to enable them to 'change the world'. She is well supported by the assistant headteacher who shares her energy and passion, as well as by a dedicated governing body actively engaged in the daily life of the school. The school's partnership with the church is highly valued. The church is described by many as 'part of the school' reflecting its centrality. The school engages actively with the diocese through attending training courses and special occasions, such as the leavers' service in Salisbury Cathedral.

School leaders have a clear focus on raising pupil achievement, particularly in writing, and this work is shaped by the vision. The school is inclusive and all pupils are warmly welcomed and supported to be able to flourish. The personalised approach to learning, particularly for vulnerable pupils, results in each feeling valued as a unique individual. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) share the aspiration laid out in the vision. Continuous encouragement and affirmation results in all pupils feeling they 'can do it' regardless of any additional needs they may have. Although attainment in some areas is below national averages, improvement is taking place and standards are rising.

Pupils have frequent opportunities within RE and collective worship, as well as other curriculum areas, to develop their own spirituality. Reflecting the vision particularly well is the global development work. This enables pupils to develop a deeper understanding of themselves and those around them. These opportunities are currently planned into the curriculum and collective worship and are led by school staff. The school does not have a shared definition of spirituality, which results in limiting potential in this area. There are minimal opportunities for pupils to engage in spontaneous, self-initiated reflection or prayer to deepen their spirituality further.

A key strength is the global development and social action work that defines this school and encapsulates the vision. As a result, pupils from a village school where diversity is limited have an impressive level of aspiration for themselves and for others around the world. Pupils are excited and motivated by their participation in 'WE day' and talk with great enthusiasm about coming up with more ways to 'change the world'. Pupils are inspired into action and they, largely, manage this themselves. They talk about litter and fund-raising projects they have initiated independently. One child summed this up: 'we're trying to make our world a better place for everyone'. Parents talk of pupils' aspiration and their sense that they can achieve anything if they try. They attribute this to the vision of the school.

Maintaining mutually supportive relationships between all members of the community is key at this school. Staff talk of support received professionally and personally and parents say that 'nothing is ever too much trouble'. All members of the school community report a strong sense of 'family' and this is firmly attributed to the vision. Everyone considers themselves to have a key role and feels part of what the school is aspiring to through its vision. Behaviour is good and this is also linked to the 'family' nature of the school: 'you, me, us… everyone'. Older pupils have been trained as peer mediators to support others to be able to disagree well and work through challenges at playtimes. It is too soon to see the impact of this work. Staff training around mental health awareness demonstrates the priority school leaders place on this area. Leaders have responded to the needs of individuals through training additional emotional literacy support assistants (ELSA). This has provided increased emotional support to enable these pupils to flourish.

The headteacher is passionate about collective worship and describes it as the 'heartbeat of the school'. Her aim is that all will be 'touched' as a result of daily acts of worship. Pupils enjoy worship and sing with great exuberance. Collective worship provides opportunities for teaching, stillness and reflection about the school vision and values enhancing pupils' and adults' depth of understanding. The 'worship crew' consider their responsibilities of setting up for worship and taking part in leading acts of worship as a privilege. Pupils have a good understanding of God in three persons and many are able to articulate this with clarity. They do not yet have an understanding of what the Eucharist means to Christians. Pupils respectfully engage in times of prayer in collective worship and in class. Their understanding of the purpose of prayer is not yet deep and pupils do not see prayer as something personal that could help them. Pupils enjoy visitors leading worship, including the vicar and local 'open the book' team. All staff take responsibility for leading whole school acts of worship clearly reflecting the vision.

© The National Society (Church of England and Church in Wales) for the Promotion of Education 2018 // Updated September 2018

The school's global awareness work enhances learning in RE. Pupils have a good awareness of other cultures around the world. They have a developing understanding of world faiths and talk with enthusiasm about current learning in RE. Pupils' understanding of Christianity is beginning to deepen. School leaders identified this as an area for development resulting in investing in the 'Understanding Christianity' resource. This is not yet used sufficiently consistently to be able to have a significant impact. Assessment systems are in place in RE although these are not sufficiently rigorous to inform next steps in teaching and learning. There are clear systems in place for monitoring the curriculum and elements of church school distinctiveness. This has brought about some improvements in worship and RE. For example, improvements in the pride and presentation in RE books. Foundation governors' understanding of the vision in action across all aspects of the school is not yet sufficiently deep. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met.

VA ONLY

The effectiveness of RE is Good

RE has an increasing priority within the curriculum. Teaching and learning in RE is monitored by school leaders and this has brought about improvements. Quality of teaching is good in RE and teachers are creative in planning. Pupils make progress in line with expectations and those with SEND are well supported to achieve in line with their peers.

Headteacher	Emma Roberts
Inspector's name and number	Anna Willcox 915

© The National Society (Church of England and Church in Wales) for the Promotion of Education 2018 // Updated September 2018