

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

### St Cuthbert's Church of England Academy Infants and Pre-school

<b>Address</b>	Keward Walk, Wells , Somerset BA5 1TZ		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	10 July 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Single Academy inspected as a VC Infants and Pre-school Academy
<b>Diocese / Methodist District</b>	<b>Diocese of Bath and Wells</b>	<b>URN</b>	<b>138942</b>

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</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>Additional Judgement</b>		
<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

#### School context

St Cuthbert's is an infant school with 139 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. The school became an academy in 2012 and the pre-school became part of the academy in 2016. The school was graded 'good' by Ofsted in October 2017. The acting headteacher from September 2017 became permanent in April 2018.

#### The school's Christian vision

Our values and expectations are rooted in the power of kindness and this is at the heart of all we do.  
Inspiring the Hope of the Future (Underpinning Bible verse: Corinthians 16:14)

#### Key findings

- The inclusive Christian vision that drives school improvement is due to the strong, enthusiastic, caring leadership of the headteacher, staff and governors.
- Inclusive, nurturing relationships, based on Christian love and kindness and the vision, influence all members of the community. They provide foundations upon which everyone aims to make the best of their God-given talents.
- Effective, mutually beneficial partnerships are being developed with the church, local schools and the community, and this enhances the learning of pupils and adults. However, global links are less well developed.
- Recently revisited core Christian values associated with the vision, are becoming increasingly embedded throughout the school. This is having an impact on pupils' good behaviour and their positive attitudes to life and learning.
- Pupils respond enthusiastically to collective worship, which is well planned to support the vision. However, pupils have less opportunity to plan and lead collective worship.

#### Areas of 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.
- Develop interactive reflection/prayer areas in classrooms to deepen spirituality.
- Create global partnership links to provide opportunities for pupils to explore injustice and inequality.

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

St Cuthbert's lives and breathes its Christian vision and the Christian values thread through everything they do. The school is inclusive and welcoming to all. Parents support this saying, 'Love, kindness and hope is promoted ... every child is valued and cherished regardless of their beliefs.' The vision is deeply rooted by a bible verse (Corinthians 16:14). The kindness and friendship shown is an expression of its Christian vision and is constantly referred to in daily school life. Attractive displays throughout the school, including a 'tree of kindness', remind pupils of the vision in a highly appropriate way. Pupils understand the source of their chosen school values.

School improvement is driven by the Christian vision. This underpins learning and support for pupils' and staff wellbeing, enabling all to grow in confidence and achieve success. Leaders and governors have established an effective church school self-evaluation process. Through regular monitoring visits, governors have a clear idea of school performance, achievement and the way in which the vision is being lived out, showing their strong commitment to the school's Christian foundation.

The Christian vision 'inspiring our hope for the future' is made explicit through high level care offered. The school always goes the extra mile in offering support to pupils and families when there are difficulties. Leaders and staff ensure that all are enabled to flourish within a supportive Christian framework. There is an exciting broad curriculum, that includes 'wow' days and outdoor learning to 'kick start pupils' interests and curiosity'. Interesting teaching, the nurturing culture and support for disadvantaged pupils in overcoming challenges have ensured pupils make strong progress in Reception and Key Stage 1. Standards of attainment are above the national average. Greater proportions of pupils reach the higher standards in reading and writing than those found nationally. The school encourages all pupils 'to be the best they can be' as they are championed as stars of the week with both kindness and achievement awards. Issues such as persistent absence are approached with Christian love and compassion and this has been successful in raising levels of attendance.

A strong sense of community, driven by the vision, develops effective partnerships. St Cuthbert's church enriches and is enriched by the involvement of the pupils, staff and parents as they often worship and celebrate together. The vicar regularly leads collective worship following the planning by the school. He also acts as a resource who supports the staff as they lead worship and teach religious education (RE). Partnership with the diocese is strong and professional development opportunities are widely taken up by all. The pre-school now joins the school weekly for collective worship, upholds the chosen Christian values and is supported with RE. The recent move into the main school building, has enabled the pre-school manager to feel fully supported by the headteacher and the whole staff team. Although the school is a single academy, effective communication with the neighbouring junior school enables a sharing of expertise, joint moderation and training opportunities. Leaders from the infant and junior schools have formed an Ethos group with the vicar. This ensures a shared Christian vision is at the forefront of school improvement from 3 to 11 years of age.

Pupils' excellent behaviour is strongly influenced by the Christian vision. The school rules, based around and woven into the school's Christian values, are also linked to collective worship, RE and personal, health and social education (PHSE). Pupils recognise how the values and school rules influence their behaviour, attitudes and relationships. Governors and parents comment on how pupils know and respect the school rules which gives them an understanding of living well together in school and in the wider community in which they live. Members of the school council are committed to reinforce these rules in order to 'keep everyone safe'. Pupils make a very clear link between Jesus' teaching, Christian values and their own actions, such as supporting charitable causes. Pupils visit the local care home, support the Connect Soup kitchen in Wells and undertake charity fundraising. However, pupils understanding of injustice and inequality is less well developed.

Staff feel supported and appreciated in many ways, 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. The vicar's pastoral support for the headteacher and the staff has also resulted in more effective links with the church community.

Worship is at the heart of school life, effectively underpinning and extending the school's inclusive Christian vision. It is well led by staff, clergy and visitors from other local Christian communities so it is both invitational and engaging. Careful planning explores Christian values and themes imaginatively with a strong focus on reflection based on the life and teaching of Jesus. A candle is lit at the beginning of worship and pupils share a Christian greeting which reinforces God's presence. Pupils' attitudes are positive because they feel included and involved. They participate actively, answering questions and helping to act out stories, so levels of engagement

are high. 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 an understanding of the nature of God. Prayer is important in the life of the school. The value pupils place on this is shown by prominent class prayer/reflection areas and a prayer display in the library. One group of pupils said 'we pray to God to be kind.' Pupils write their own prayers which are included in whole school and class-based worship. Class reflection and prayer books are further evidence of developing spirituality. However, reflection areas lack pupil engagement and do not help strongly enough towards developing spirituality.

Pupils are enthused by the well planned RE curriculum. Staff and pupils focus on a Christian value each term and apply this across all aspects of school life. RE provision strengthens the school's core values and vision through reference to these in weekly lessons. RE makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Use of the county agreed syllabus ensures pupils have rich learning experiences developing their knowledge of Christianity and other major world faiths. The school is exploring a new global link which supports this. As well as being taught discretely RE is integrated into curriculum topics, which gives even further opportunity for discussions on big questions of meaning. Leaders, including the Ethos Committee, monitor teaching and learning of RE closely, ensuring pupils are developing bible knowledge and have age-appropriate understanding.

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