



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John the Evangelist Church of England VA Primary School, Carterton	
Address	Bluebell Way, Carterton, OX18 1JF

School vision

We aspire for all children and adults to grow as children of God, to be the best they can be. We want all to have respect for themselves and each other, along with a wonder and curiosity for God’s creation. ‘They will lift up their wings and soar like eagles, embracing life in all its fullness.’ (Isaiah 40:31 and John 10:10). Our vision reflects the ambition of the school community to care for others and achieve excellence.

School strengths

- The Christian vision drives the actions and decisions of leaders. This enables pupils and adults to rise and soar.
- Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and disability (SEND) are nurtured and supported. The school’s inclusive ethos means all can be the best they can be.
- The school creates numerous and wide-ranging opportunities for reflection. This promotes and enhances the spiritual development of both pupils and adults.
- The consistent commitment to the Christian vision shapes positive relationships based on justice and responsibility. Pupils therefore have respect for themselves and for each other.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum is tailored to the context of the school. This means it is relatable and maximises pupils’ potential to make progress.

Areas for development

- Re-establish and widen connections with places of worship, including local churches. This is to develop pupils’ awareness of special and sacred space.
- Adapt and embed the new RE scheme of work for the school’s context. This is to ensure RE remains relevant to pupils’ lives.

Inspection findings

The Christian vision of St John the Evangelist Primary School is present in every aspect of its life and work. Together with the school’s six Christian values, the vision directs and drives the actions and decisions of pupils and adults. Pupils build positive relationships based on respect and unity. This is because adults and pupils naturally talk about the values as part of the daily life of the school. Pupils easily refer to the values in their work and play, both in school and in the wider community. Governors and leaders use the vision to inform strategic decisions on issues such as staffing and funding. This maximises the opportunities for pupils and adults to ‘rise and soar’. Creative support is put in place within the school and beyond for pupils and their families. This means that pupils of



differing abilities and backgrounds are enabled to achieve excellence. Staff are grown and nurtured, often progressing through a range of roles to be the best they can be.

The curriculum is creative and ambitious, providing interest and challenge for pupils. This clearly reflects the vision to achieve excellence. A constant process of review and reflection keeps pupils' learning focused, fresh and relevant. Leaders are relentless in securing the right support for vulnerable pupils and those with SEND. The school gives high priority to inclusion. This creates a strong and positive ethos of acceptance throughout the school community. Pupils are willing to embrace difference and help others. Spiritual development runs through the entire curriculum for pupils of all ages, using a shared structure and language. This means that pupils embrace spirituality as an integral, strikingly ordinary part of their lives. The youngest pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of awe and wonder about every-day life. Older pupils are taught to understand the diverse, personal nature of spiritual experiences. In these ways, pupils appreciate the relevance and importance of spirituality. Through teaching about these concepts, adults' own spiritual development is enhanced.

Worship is central to the life of St John's and highly valued. It brings the school community together to reflect more deeply on the Christian roots of the vision and values. Worship themes relate bible stories to the school's values. The values therefore create a bridge, connecting biblical teachings with pupils' own lives. Adults and pupils engage with a variety of forms of worship. Within this, the school always ensures there is space for prayer and reflection. Pupils and adults are therefore comfortable with silence and stillness. This demonstrates a high level of spiritual development. They recognise the value and importance of slowing down and being calm in an otherwise busy, fast-paced environment. Close links are forged between worship and RE, with themes from worship followed up in lessons. Pupils therefore develop a deeper understanding of the Christian roots of the worship they experience. The pattern of worship is carefully crafted in collaboration with church leaders. This develops a common approach and demonstrates the close links between the school and its local churches. Pupils and staff take great value and meaning from occasional 'pilgrimages' to worship in the local church. However, the frequency of these visits has reduced over time, leaving pupils unfamiliar with the church environment.

Pupils and adults are treated with love and respect, enabling them to grow as children of God. The school works hard to provide for the local community, creating a focal point with an open-door approach. Leaders have prioritised the needs of families by resourcing the provision of a new space. This, together with the employment of specialist staff, provides a welcoming, accessible way for families to engage with the school. Good relationships are formed, meaning that pupils are comfortable attending school and attendance is strengthened. The particular needs of pupils from service families are recognised and addressed. They receive dedicated support during deployment and for coping with change. This helps them to continue to learn and prosper even during difficult times. Staff are valued and supported in their professional and spiritual development. They are given opportunities to take on new roles, facilitated through the provision of time and training. This grows the individual staff and provides additional expertise for the benefit of pupils and other colleagues.

There is a strong culture of justice, rooted in the school's Christian vision and values. Pupils are encouraged to take on a range of roles, building a well-developed sense of responsibility towards others. Some act as 'values champions', actively promoting the school's values through worship and class discussions. These values become the toolkit for living out the vision from day to day. Peer mediator training gives pupils the skills to develop a culture of acceptance and inclusion. Pupils take the initiative to act as agents of change on local and global issues. Individual pupils, supported by the school community, have raised substantial amounts of money for their chosen charitable causes. Through the annual harvest festival, the school community supports the local foodbanks. In

these ways, pupils are actively involved in Christian charity. They value and respect others – both near and far – as children of God. Within the local area, pupils and adults have come together to initiate and promote discussion on proposed new developments. They understand that their actions can have impact at many levels, both locally and globally.

Pupils are interested in, and enthusiastic about, RE. This is a result of rigorous, high-quality planning and teaching which motivates pupils to make strong progress. The school skilfully adapts Diocesan resources in response to the context of the community. This builds pupils' curiosity, creating a genuine interest in the subject. Work in RE deepens pupils' understanding of the school's values and important events in its life. At the same time, they are developing understanding of a variety of worldviews and faiths. Creative planning enables pupils to enjoy learning through a range of activities and challenge. These range from structured play for the youngest to complex debates for the oldest. Specialist teaching of pupils with SEND shares the same curriculum, ensuring that provision and inclusion are maintained. The scheme of work is kept fresh and stimulating because of leaders' responsive evaluation and the contribution of the diocese. RE is primarily taught on focus days each term, during which pupils explore a big question. This raises the status of the subject and allows in-depth analysis of key concepts. Pupils' understanding of world religions is further enriched through visits and visitors. RE work is recorded in class books, enabling staff to collate a range of different types of responses from them. This demonstrates the wide variety of ways in which pupils are encouraged to learn in RE. Pupils and staff are proud of their class books which enable progress to be tracked over time. This means that staff, leaders and governors are well-informed about pupil progress.

The inspection findings indicate that St John the Evangelist School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	19 June 2024	URN	133532
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	471
Diocese	Oxford		
MAT/Federation			
Acting headteacher	Marie Wargent		
Chair	Mark Winch		
Inspector	James Manship	No.	2241