

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Buckland St Mary Church of England Primary School

Vision

‘That they may have life, life in all its fullness’. (John 10:10)

Buckland St Mary Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The school’s Christian vision is known and understood by the whole school community so all can have fullness of life. Pupils and staff learn and work together with love and encouragement.
- Partnerships with the school are strong and enhance provision. The church and the wider community are key partners. These relationships aid pupils to become future change-makers and live out the school’s vision.
- Collective worship reflects the Christian foundation of the school. This living vision and character values are central. They guide the spiritual development of pupils and adults.
- Pupils enjoy the variety of opportunities to take responsibility through leadership roles. This helps them to be the best that they can be, whilst inspiring others to have ‘life in all its fullness’.
- Teachers and leaders have embraced the new religious education (RE) syllabus, supported by the trust and diocesan training. This is ensuring that pupils enjoy learning about a range of religions and non-religious worldviews.

Development Points

- Continue to develop and embed the current assessment system for religious and worldviews education (RWE). This is to ensure that pupils ‘know more and remember more’ about a range of religious and non-religious worldviews.
- Further develop planned opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum by embedding the Academies of Character and Excellence (ACE) curriculum and character values. This is so pupils can deepen their understanding of ‘upness’ and enhance their spiritual development and growth.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision of Buckland St Mary's School is at the heart of their work. Led by committed leaders and enhanced by the trust, all within the community experience a vision that inspires action. Pupils understand how the vision helps them and they are able to share their understanding of 'fullness of life'. Established ways of learning, encourage pupils to take time to reflect about who they are and who they could be. The vision helps pupils to make positive choices about their learning and friendships and to look beyond the school gates. Pupils and families are nurtured whilst given the tools to grow. The school staff team and families know each other well and work together to support all pupils. This is achieved through effective communication, open relationships and good systems. Pupils reflect that the vision helps them to 'make the most of what you've got and help others to have a good life'. The local advocate board (LAB) are knowledgeable and are committed to everyone in the school. Driven and supported by the vision, they undertake monitoring and evaluation in partnership with trust and school leaders. The valued partnership with the ACE trust enhances the work of the school through their shared vision and mission of flourishing for all. This is a small village school, at the heart of its community, where all are given the chance to flourish.

Pupils and staff are excited by the curriculum which is underpinned by the school's vision. A clear culture of learning for all includes high expectations which is supported through ongoing training, planning and assessment. The use of enquiry questions encourages deeper thinking. Pupils enjoy the freedom to try out new ideas for presenting their work. They are eager to share their learning in their enquiry books and see themselves as curious explorers. Enrichment opportunities are planned which ensure that local links are strengthened alongside pupils' understanding of the wider world. Pupils are proud of their reflective journals as they celebrate the views of the class, linked to the school values. Each pupil is an important individual within the school community and their flourishing is celebrated and valued. The revised language of spirituality is supporting staff and pupils to reflect on their own world and the world around them. However, pupils' ability to confidently articulate how they look 'up' and consider their connection with something greater is less well developed.

Collective worship is well planned and led. The use of the Bible and stories linked to everyday examples expands pupils' understanding of the school values and character values. Through discussion, leaders enable pupils and staff to understand more about the language, signs and symbols of Anglican worship. Pupils, therefore, are actively engaged in worship which includes times of reflection and inspiration. The clergy are a crucial worship partner, this includes working together to plan and lead worship. Parents see the school and church as one. The recent remembrance service was led by the school at the village memorial. This was a special moment for the school and community, coming together to reflect and pray. For some families, this led to discussions about who 'we remember' at home. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to support and lead parts of worship, guided by staff. 'Praise and Share' worship is led by the classes. Parents enjoy being part of the school worshipping community including attending regular services at the church. Leading worship impacts on pupils' confidence and they know they have a real part to play in the life of the school. This also deepens their spiritual development. There are times of stillness and reflection in worship with an invitation to pray and praise. Staff welcome this space and recognise how this enhances their own spiritual development, as well as the pupils.

The school's vision enables a culture of respect and warmth which is extended to all. Modelled by leaders and staff, compassion and drive help pupils to develop as citizens of this school and the world. Pupils understand that they are an individual within a special community. All have strengths and needs; they have their own opinions



which are heard. Pupils are taught how to respond to each other and are given a voice so disagreements are resolved through forgiveness. The school works collaboratively with parents and other partners to promote and sustain the wellbeing of all. This is demonstrated through thoughtful and timely communications. Adults are championed so they flourish in their roles and there is a shared responsibility for the inclusion of all pupils. Pupils and parents agree that they are treated well and that the staff are approachable and supportive. The Buckland St Mary team is a strength where all learn together and have fullness of life.

Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate leadership and have an awareness of others. A variety of opportunities to take on responsibilities are available including being a buddy, play leader or worship leader. Pupils see these roles as being an important part of the life of the school. Through these roles, they are developing their leadership skills and enabling flourishing. As pupils progress through the school, they develop a broader understanding of justice. This is enhanced by the curriculum enquiries and reflection time. Inspired by the vision, plans to support a school in Zambia are in progress. Working in partnership with the church, they are making use of technology to aid communication and to develop a meaningful link.

The impact of using the new syllabus ensures that RWE is broad and balanced. It is well-sequenced and diverse so pupils are better prepared for life in modern Britain. RWE has a high profile and is enthusiastically and effectively led. Supported by regular training and networks, the school has developed effective plans so that gaps in learning are addressed. The use of key vocabulary and open-ended or 'big' questions help pupils build confidence and their ability to express themselves. This is seen across the school. The youngest children in the school remember the 'characters' from the Nativity and confidently retell the Christmas story together. Pupils have opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge, however, some pupils are not able to confidently talk about a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. The trust leadership and partner schools provide further expertise and challenge to ensure that the RWE curriculum is relevant for all pupils.

Pupils enjoy RWE and are proud to share their learning. Teaching is good. Leaders effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning which informs future training and planning. Systems are in place and staff at all levels have a good understanding of pupils' progress in RWE. Assessment is not fully embedded. Consequently, not all pupils are able to remember and build on their knowledge and understanding of a range of worldviews. Teachers and staff use skilful questioning and pupils' responses are strong as they give thoughtful answers supported by good teaching.

Information

Address	Buckland St Mary, Chard, Somerset, TA20 3SJ		
Date	06 December 2024	URN	150638
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	61
Diocese	Bath and Wells		
MAT	Academies for Character and Excellence (ACE)		
Headteacher	Ethne Staniland		
Chair of Governors Chair of Trust	Kate Albon Roger Willoughby		
Inspector	Jo Hunter		