



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

North Curry Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address North Curry, Taunton, Somerset, TA3 6NQ

How effective is the school’s distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Overall grade **Good**

The impact of collective worship **Good**

School’s vision

Together Everyone Achieves More Through Loving learning, loving each other, and loving life itself.
Agape: The Good Samaritan. Luke 10:25-37

Key findings

- The inspirational and highly regarded headteacher, together with staff, has created a vibrant learning community. Mental health and wellbeing are prioritised ensuring that the school's distinctive Christian vision enables all to flourish.
- School leaders, including governors, ensure that collective worship and religious education are prioritised particularly in their self-evaluation process. However, they do not sufficiently focus on the impact of the Christian vision on other aspects of the life of the school.
- Whilst issues of inequality and injustice are raised within the curriculum, pupils do not yet feel empowered by the vision to make a tangible difference by engaging in social action projects.
- Religious education (RE) reflects the school’s vision by promoting a love of learning about and from people of faith including Christianity.
- Collective worship has a central role in the life of the school reflecting its Christian vision to share love amongst the whole school community.

Areas for development

- Ensure the Church school self-evaluation process is sufficiently robust, leading to greater school improvement.
- Raise the profile of global issues of inequality and injustice within the curriculum so that pupils are inspired to act as advocates for change and engage in social action projects.
- Extend the numbers of pupils involved in planning and leading worship to promote their active engagement and spiritual development.

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 school has a distinctive Christian vision which is lived out in the exceptionally close relationships within its school community, enabling all to flourish. The headteacher has significantly strengthened this vision since her arrival by introducing the Christian concept of agape or unconditional love. Leaders and staff have the highest aspirations for their pupils. They place the happiness and wellbeing of their pupils at the heart of all decision making, creating a strong love of learning. As a result, a high priority is given to continuous professional development for all staff. In this way, staff know they are highly valued as individuals and as a team. School leaders demonstrate the importance of collective worship and RE in the life of the school in a number of ways. These include regularly monitoring and evaluating their impact in reflecting the school's vision. However, they do not always monitor other aspects such as the impact of Christian vision on the curriculum. Parents were very well supported during the pandemic. The Senior Mental Health Lead is very well known to parents with whom she enjoys excellent relations. This is an example of the way the vision is lived out enabling the whole school community to flourish. Partnerships with the churches in the village are impressive and have a good impact on collective worship and the life of the school. The partnerships with the Diocese and the multi academy trust (MAT) are good. The MAT has recognized the expertise of the headteacher and has benefitted in various ways from the support and training she has provided.

The school's own creative curriculum is a highly innovative expression of its Christian vision enabling all to love life. Pupils recognize that their individual interests and enthusiasms are valued and developed. In this way, the curriculum is continually adapted and enhanced so that it meets the needs of each pupil enabling all to flourish. Teaching strategies are motivating and enable learning to be made explicit. Consequently, pupils recognize the progress they make and enthuse about their learning. The curriculum is enriched by regular visits and visitors, and special themed days or weeks such as Science, Parliament, and Harvest. The school's curriculum encourages and challenges pupils to be the best they can be.

Staff have a shared understanding of spiritual development. From an early age, there is a strong focus on developing curiosity, by asking questions and reflecting on responses. As a result, pupils are able to reflect deeply on the wide variety of experiences provided. Residential visits such as the recent one for Year 6 pupils provided good opportunities for developing spiritual awareness. This was evident in a girl's comment that the way new friendships had been formed had surprised her. Pupils known as 'Charity Champs' select initiatives to support such as 'Choose Love,' clearly in line with their Christian vision. Pupils are passionate about conservation and the need to address issues which exploit the natural world. As a result, 'Eco-Pirates' are leading action to reduce plastic waste in lunchboxes. Open ended 'Big Questions' are used particularly in collective worship and religious education. However, they are not generally used to explore and develop pupils' understanding of disadvantage and deprivation in the wider curriculum.

Pupils enjoy interacting with people from the local village. Before the pandemic they enjoyed sharing their love with elderly residents by inviting them to share their lunchtimes. Pupils enjoy learning about the wider world beyond their local area. They cherish their links with a boy in Kenya whose education they support by fundraising. They show concern and care for his life. However, they are motivated by compassion rather than a sense of injustice and inequality. Difference and diversity are celebrated in the school's open, inclusive culture. Prior to the pandemic, a link was being created with a school in central Bristol. The intention was to widen pupils understanding of difference and diversity.

The school places a high priority on the mental health and wellbeing of all within its school community. Its provision for this is exceptional and very effective. Calming, reflective strategies to promote self-awareness and spiritual development are embedded and are having a powerful impact. Consequently, relationships are highly supportive, and bullying is rare. All pupils have access to support from the inspirational Senior Mental Health Lead who also provides counselling support to all staff. As a result, high levels of trust exist between all groups and staff morale is high.

Collective worship is inclusive, inspirational, and central to daily life at North Curry. It is a vibrant expression of its vision 'to love each other and love life itself'. Worship themes root the school's Christian values in biblical stories as well as the Christian calendar. Worship strongly unites the whole school as a loving community in line with their vision. This is because the nursery class is present and often parents, who continue to enjoy accessing worship online. The vicar has a strong presence in school, visiting classes as well as leading worship. The Methodist and Baptist ministers also visit regularly often providing invaluable support and training to the pupil leaders, known as 'Worship Warriors'. Anglican practice is embedded by liturgical greetings and responses, including those linked to the three candles lit to represent the Christian belief of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Class-based reflective spaces and times of stillness and prayer contrast with joyous interactive singing promote spiritual development very well. The school prayer placing God's love at the heart of the life of the school has a good impact by promoting the school's Christian vision. In a very short time, the small group of pupils known as the 'Worship Warriors' are now regularly leading whole school worship. They benefit from spending time with the headteacher discussing their roles and planning and leading school worship. Evaluations, though informal at present, involve all ages and inform future planning.

Religious education (RE) is recognized as an exciting and inspiring subject. It strongly reflects the vision by promoting a love of learning about people. The curriculum is planned very well using an effective balance in line with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. Pupils enjoy RE because teaching is challenging and motivating, enabling them to think deeply about their beliefs and those of others. Pupils enjoy asking probing questions, listening respectfully to one another and in this way developing their thinking and enjoying their learning. They have a good understanding of Christianity as a living and diverse faith. They show good levels of interest and respectful understanding of a range of faiths. The headteacher leads the subject with passion sharing her enthusiasm with staff. She has developed very effective systems for teachers to understand and implement pupils' next steps in learning. Her expertise is greatly valued by the MAT where she regularly leads training for schools in the partnership.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	23 March 2022	URN	145675
Date of previous inspection	23 April 2015		
School status	Voluntary controlled academy converter primary school	NOR	135
Name of MAT	The Richard Huish Trust		
Diocese	Bath & Wells		
Headteacher	Helen Morley		
Pupil profile	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.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	The school serves a rural village close to Taunton which has five classes and a nursery/pre-school on site.		
Inspector's name	Daphne Spitzer	No.	37