

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Beaminster St Mary's Academy			
Address	Clay Lane, Beaminster, Dorset, DT8 3BY		
Date of inspection	21 November 2019	Status of school	Academy inspected as VA. Salisbury Diocesan Academies Trust (DSAT)
Diocese	Salisbury	URN	140560

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Beaminster St Mary's is a primary school with 85 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 above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school is a member of the Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust (DSAT). Currently there is an interim headteacher in post.

The school's Christian vision

Where children come first; belonging and building together.
'Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God.'
Matthew 19:14

Key findings

- The school's Christian vision that underpins every aspect of school life accurately reflects the current relentless drive to ensure all flourish. Within this, there is a real focus on belonging and building together so that the whole school community is connected on this journey.
- The Christian ethos of inclusion and supportive collaboration is transforming the individual lives of pupils, families and staff so all flourish. Respect and trust are lived out and exemplified in many ways. A good example of this is the 'Door of Dignity'.
- There is already a strong connection between church and school which pupils value. Thoughtful and reflective pupils actively engage in worship which has an impact on the way they live their lives.
- Pupils readily and eloquently articulate the Christian story which nurtures their spiritual lives. Class religious education (RE) books and the reflection book demonstrate this depth and application.
- Assessment in RE is in place for the youngest and oldest pupils but consistency across the school is at an early stage.

Areas for development

- Whilst governors are regularly involved in the life of the school, ensure they formalise the monitoring of RE and collective worship to effectively support the school's journey of development.
- Embed the assessment of RE across the whole school to inform an accurate picture of pupil progress for all groups of pupils.
- Extend the current evaluation of collective worship by pupils, to include younger pupils, in order to nurture their personal and spiritual lives.
- Enable pupils to meet people of diverse faiths and beliefs more frequently to enrich their spiritual and cultural 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

All members of this school community play their part and ensure each pupil flourishes and grows. As one member of staff put it, pupils develop the 'resilience, skills and strengths to tackle life successfully and fly'. This is because warmth, nurture and wellbeing are at the heart of St Mary's where children really do come first. Adults and pupils know they belong and are building the Christian family environment together. The Christian vision could not be more apt for this community at this stage of its journey. Christian values are embedded so that each and every pupil can achieve spiritually, mentally, emotionally and academically. Governors consistently challenge and support the leadership. The interim headteachers have worked closely with the diocese and the trust to maintain the Christian vision to put every child first. This has been significant in this inclusive school where rebuilding respect, trust and confidence is enabling all to flourish. There is a clear strategy, within a spirit of Christian care and love. Leaders are building a tailored curriculum so that everyone can believe in themselves and aspire to be a powerful force for good in the world.

Within a culture of raised aspirations for pupils, parents and staff, there is a real connectivity in this school's particular journey. Trust and respect underpin honest conversations and help build the next step, so the right conditions enable all to grow. Children come first and deservedly flourish in this school as everyone truly belongs. Support from staff is especially valuable for any vulnerable pupils and their families, living out the school's vision. Weekly book looks occur, with the assistant headteacher taking a lead in English and assessment. Parents are happy and positive about the future, noting the difference in their children. One parent cited their son enjoys reading. A clear vision and a well-crafted curriculum means children come first and are now reaching a higher standard in all areas of their work. Any vulnerable groups are successful in their learning and achieve well. All groups of pupils make good progress.

Being connected to people and to God is making a real difference in how St Mary's pupils see their role in the community and beyond. They are deeply thoughtful and reflective, proudly thinking of charity fundraising ideas, such as helping the homeless. Pupils feel it is important to speak out and be heard and so engage in successful toilet twinning activities or eco days. Concerned for social justice in the world, they know how a loaf of bread can transform the hungry, given in a spirit of love. Pupils consider how lives can be changed and how they and others can be instrumental in making their community and the world a better place. This is reflected in themes in worship as well as RE lessons, such as contributing to a sustainable community and looking after God's world.

Within this family community, there is a real sense of adults and pupils looking after each other and embracing the school values. One parent contributed that her daughter re-enacts celebration worship at home, switching on a candle to reflect. Compassion, hope, reconciliation and responsibility are foundational to the way St Mary's is building the school community. One member of staff spoke of total inclusion as the cornerstone in this 'happy house of education'. Pupils are accepting of diversity and difference. They regularly use the 'Door of Dignity' to post a prayer or thought, affirming others who live out such values. The depth of their questions, modelling dignity, demonstrates how pupils build on self-reflection, feeling they can change the world. Parents are supportive of church services, making connections with others in the local community. The school has worked hard at building relationships of trust over the last two years, opening the door of hope and receiving a welcome response. Such reciprocity reflects the trust's vision. A bold decision to serve pupils better is seen in the connected approach to especially help vulnerable pupils on their journey. A particular success has been Project Touchline, bringing RE, sport and Christian values working fervently together in a spirit of reflection. Pupils confirm they can excel in rugby as well as RE.

Building possibility and belief is enshrined in the 'Bible buffet' or 'smorgasbord of excitement' offered to engage pupils and adults in daily worship. This lifts aspirations and affirms the school's vision and values, nurturing the spiritual lives of all. Five times a week the community comes together to reflect, build and grow, with pupils independently leading celebration worship every Friday. Pupils led worship to commemorate Remembrance-tide and were involved in the town's parade. Creative ways of praying are integral to the depth and breadth of song, symbolism and the form of words used in collective worship. They are growing in their understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Prayer spaces were modelled by members of the

church community and now pupils use prayer and reflection areas in dedicated places throughout the school. Bible stories, such as the Good Samaritan or the stoning of Stephen, enable pupils to reflect on how to be a peacemaker in the community. Inspirational and memorable themes explore the global dimension, making connections with everyday life. Pupils' viewpoints on worship to grow ideas and change are gathered, although currently this is mainly drawn from older pupils. Formal monitoring of worship by governors is currently limited.

St Mary's lives its vision through everything it does. The new RE subject leader is given dedicated time for RE learning walks and book scrutinies, as befits all subject areas. She is enthusiastic and has worked hard since September. Leadership logs show the impact RE is making, becoming a driver for school improvement, with good practice modelled and shared. RE class floor books and the school reflection book are good examples of demonstrating different ways of gathering evidence. Individual pupil books indicate they take on their own responsibility for growth, reflected in self-assessment. Pupil interviews reflect they are curious and confident, showing their values in action, with respect for different viewpoints. Pupils readily and eloquently articulate the detail of the Christian story. Even the youngest children know Mary is represented in Christian art wearing blue. Pupils enjoy learning about beliefs and tradition important to diverse people of faith. Currently their experience in meeting people of faith more frequently is limited.

The essence of St Mary's is captured well by a member of staff who confirmed, 'This is a child, family and community centred school which has high aspirations for everyone. It is focussed on belonging and building together for successful futures.'



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Teaching and learning in RE are consistently good. More frequent and formal monitoring of RE by governors is currently limited. All staff are engaging with the journey in RE, sharing the community spirit. Embedding a new model of assessment in RE across all age groups is presently limited to the youngest and oldest pupils. All pupils are making good progress and flourishing academically in RE.

Interim Headteacher

Jane Dhillon

Inspector's name and number

Lizzie McWhirter 244