

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Croscombe Church of England VA Primary School

Address Long Street, Croscombe, Wells, United Kingdom, BA5 3QL

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**

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) **Requires Improvement**

School's vision

Let your light shine

Key findings

- Dedicated, compassionate leadership empowers strong teamwork, inclusive of everyone's gifts. Leaders and staff model the importance of the vision to let your light shine.
- Effective, vision-led governance has set a clear trajectory towards significant school improvement. However, systems for governors to evaluate the effectiveness of Croscombe as a Church school are not fully in place.
- An inspiring and nurturing Church school where all are treated with dignity and respect. A shared understanding of spirituality within the curriculum is yet to be fully developed.
- Inclusive collective worship inspires the school family, enabling all to enjoy and reflect upon God and the deeper aspects of life.
- Pupils are well motivated to learn about religious and non-religious worldviews, but they have insufficient opportunity to explore their own philosophical perspectives.

Areas for development

- Establish more robust systems to enable leaders, including governors, to evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a Church of England school.
- Construct a rich and engaging religious education (RE) curriculum, taking account of up-to-date thinking, in order to enhance pupils' substantive and personal knowledge.
- Identify a secure approach to spiritual development that is shared by all staff, enabling better planning, and tracking of spiritual growth.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to encounter diverse faith and belief contexts and so nurture pupils' 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

Croscombe is a warm and welcoming village school which proudly lives out its inclusive Christian vision to 'let your light shine'. This vision is clearly understood and valued throughout the school community. It motivates pupils to learn together and enables them to believe in their own power to develop as individuals.

Through skilful and sensitive leadership, the school offers pupils a safe place to learn and grow, in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. Leaders link the school's vision to the concept of agape, unconditional love, which underpins relationships amongst staff and pupils. Opportunities are provided for pupils to create strong friendships and follow pathways that enable them to achieve educational, personal, and spiritual growth.

Teaching staff pride themselves on building a picture of pupils' needs. Parents seek the school out because of the welcome it offers, including to those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Special care is taken to provide for children considered to be vulnerable. Support plans are regularly reviewed to ensure their learning remains on track. Emotional literacy support staff make provision for pupils deemed to be vulnerable to check-in each morning, ensuring that they can engage in the day's learning activities. An example of the school's generous agape vision is the bold ethical decision to welcome in a number of new pupils from Ukrainian refugee families.

Motivated by the vision to 'let your light shine', leaders have made good progress in taking the school forward over recent years. An example of the impact of the vision is the significant improvement which has been made in teaching and learning in a number of subjects. The designation of middle leader roles has raised the importance of subject expertise. This has empowered staff in their specialisms and has led to a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of all learners. The vision to let your light shine is lived out in the classroom through the use of the school's learning gems. This embeds powerful messages about how to become more resilient and ambitious learners.

During the COVID pandemic the school took active steps to ensure that pupils could continue to flourish. Where home learning became necessary, families were well supported through regular contact and generous offers of material assistance.

Governors are focussed on ensuring that the school's vision to let your light shine is fulfilled. They exhibit a good understanding of the school in the context of its wider community and on its important journey of improvement. Governors are up to date with their training needs from both the Diocese and the local authority.

Governors have made the bold decision to appoint joint headteachers across the federation. The impact of this has been significant in enabling the school to live out its vision for all children to flourish in their learning. Governors have given due consideration to the possible benefits of academisation. They are well-aware that it would be important for any potential academy partner to provide firm evidence that they would safeguard the school's Christian distinctiveness.

The ethos governance committee meets regularly to ensure that the school's Christian ethos is embedded within all aspects of school life. However, systems for the consistent monitoring and evaluating of the school's effectiveness as Church school are not fully in place.

The inclusive nature of collective worship is valued by pupils and adults as a time to share, reflect, and celebrate. The rhythm of singing and praying gives school life a tangible sense of togetherness. Opportunities are given for pupils to engage with different forms of worship. This includes experiencing the solemnity of Benedictine prayers at Downside School. Termly Christian values provide a focus for prayers

and reflections which connect to the pupils' lives. Pupils have some involvement with the planning and delivery of worship, but expectations for this are under-developed. Governors are aware of their monitoring role, but systems to enable this are not fully in place.

During the COVID period the school continued to share its vision of agape love through the daily provision of collective worship. Families expressed appreciation for the way leaders, supported by the parish vicar, sent videos with biblical and values themes into their homes.


The 'let your light shine' song, developed in collaboration with a local professional songwriter, inspires and motivates pupils across the school. As the pupils sing, they speak words of encouragement and comfort to themselves and each other. This inspires them to be brave, 'finding your voice' and 'shining together' and impacts on their resilience through the day. The song emphasises that 'everyone of us is a special light' and offers a reminder to 'always remember you are not alone'.

The parish vicar acts as a committed governor and provides valuable input into the life of the school. The Church of St Mary the Virgin plays an important role in hosting school worship gatherings and periodic celebrations. Staff regard the church as a valuable resource for teaching about Christianity in RE. The school makes an important investment into outside learning experiences. The skilful provision of forest school activities gives pupils powerful opportunities to develop their spirituality through their connection with the natural world.

Although some provision has been made, pupils lack significant opportunities to engage with people from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds.

There is a deep sense of spirituality embedded throughout the school community and this is valued by parents and pupils. Spirituality is modelled around an understanding of the golden rule, embodying a sense of respect for oneself and others, valuing the whole child. However, a shared understanding of spiritual development across the curriculum is yet to be fully articulated by leaders.

There is evidence of careful curriculum planning in RE, led by the vision to learn and grow together. However, there is insufficient encouragement for pupils to develop philosophical or sociological approaches to their learning. RE teaching is engaging, but the school's curriculum is insufficiently challenging or progressive, and overly focussed on a narrow understanding of the subject. Pupils say topics are too often repeated and they are not given enough opportunity to develop their own personal worldviews and perspectives.

	The effectiveness of RE is	Requires Improvement
	<p>Pupils are enthusiastic in their engagement with their learning in RE and are keen to understand more about other faiths and worldviews.</p> <p>Pupils write and speak thoughtfully about Christian beliefs but are less confident in their understanding of other religious and non-religious traditions.</p> <p>The link between how well pupils are progressing as a result of the RE curriculum is unclear.</p>	

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	18 May 2022	URN	123829
Date of previous inspection	15 April 2015		
School status	VA	NOR	067
Name of Multi Academy Trust or Federation	FEDERATION - Croscombe / Stoke St Michael Primary		
Diocese or Methodist Circuit	Bath & Wells		
Headteacher	Co-Heads: William Moore and Mel Vincent		
	Below National Average		

Proportion of pupils deemed to be disadvantaged			
Proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Above National Average		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Edward Pawson	No.	0904