

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sticklands Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School			
<b>Address</b>	Summer Lane, Evershot, Dorchester, Dorset, BT2 0JP		
Date of inspection	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2020	<b>Status of school</b>	Voluntary aided primary
<b>Diocese</b>	Salisbury	<b>URN</b>	113799

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

### School context

Sticklands is a primary school with 87 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. 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 above national averages. The school works closely with nine other local schools within the West Dorset Schools Collaboration.

### The school's Christian vision

'Let your light shine' – Matthew 5:16

We believe all children can shine at Sticklands and we strive for every member of our school family to succeed and flourish with us. Our caring Christian community will encourage pupils to become responsible for themselves and for others, to be independent and self-motivated and to achieve their full potential. We strive for every pupil to feel valued, knowing that their contribution to school life is unique.

### Key findings

- Pupils and staff have a good understanding of the Christian basis of the school's vision and values. They are able to articulate this well and describe the impact which it has on their community.
- Collective worship is clearly at the heart of the life of the school and plays a central role in the positive and inclusive ethos which pervades the community.
- Religious education (RE) is taught well and pupils contribute thoughtfully within lessons. They are clearly interested in theological ideas and their religious literacy develops strongly as they move through the school.
- Relationships with the local group of churches are very strong but full use has not yet been made of these to develop pupils' spirituality.
- The school's systems for reviewing its Christian ethos are underdeveloped and it has not drawn fully on partnerships to develop its ethos further.

### Areas for development

- Continue to embed the school's vision so that it more explicitly shapes development plans and policies going forward.
- Continue to embed the newly created policy for spirituality and work with the church to explore creative ways for developing spirituality throughout the school.
- Draw on partnerships to share expertise in reviewing Christian ethos and deepening the impact of the school's distinctive vision.

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**

After careful consultation, the school has created a distinctively Christian vision which gives clarity to its long-standing underlying ethos. This vision is built on a set of Christian values which, following an area for improvement from its last inspection, have been embedded within the life of the school and are now clearly understood by all members of the community. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the theological basis of the school values and vision, suggesting a range of biblical stories which exemplify these. Staff are able to explain why the vision is distinctively Christian and are very clear about the ways in which it guides the day-to-day life of the school. Governors have informally monitored the impact of the vision through learning walks, an annual questionnaire and review of the school action plan, which includes aspects of Church ethos. This has partly addressed an area for improvement from the previous inspection but monitoring now needs to be more robust and clearly focussed in order to ensure that the vision shapes future plans and policies. The school works in strong partnership with the local group of parishes and a good range of shared activities take place. The West Dorset Schools Collaboration provides a strong source of mutual support for the school and staff have also recently engaged with some training from the diocese. The school now needs to draw on these partnerships in order to gain the fullest opportunity to enhance its distinctive ethos further.

The school's educational provision is very much focussed on enabling every learner to 'let their light shine' and, to this end, an enriched curriculum has been developed in which each unit of work is linked to one of the school's values. Conscious of its particularly rural location, the school organises many visits and visitors to broaden the horizons of the pupils. Pupils are highly enthusiastic about the way in which the Forest Schools programme enhances their learning and one member of staff commented that this 'allows pupils to let their light shine beyond the classroom'. Much care is taken to support pupils with specific needs of any kind in order to ensure that they are fully enabled to flourish. Consequently, all groups of pupils enjoy their lessons and make good progress in their learning. A number of parents say that their children have joined the school from settings in which they were not flourishing and that the ethos of Sticklands has enabled them to overcome barriers and develop aspiration. The school has recently developed a policy for spirituality and now needs to draw on its partnerships for support in fully embedding this.

Staff feel strongly that, in the course of developing the school's vision, they have become much clearer about listening to the pupils' views and considering 'big questions' with them. This is certainly reflected in the pupils' attitudes to questions of social and global justice; when questioned, they are able to discuss a wide range of issues that concern them. However, the pupils are also clear that their values guide them in knowing when things are not fair and that it is up to them to make a difference. An example of this is the pupils' own initiative to raise money to support the Australian bush fire emergency. The school has a strong and active link with a school in Kenya and adults and pupils speak with conviction about the mutual benefits that have been derived from this in terms of understanding the differences and similarities between global communities.

Pupils are very clear that the ethos of the school supports them in making positive choices and parents are very much in agreement with this. The positive and nurturing atmosphere which the school provides is reflected in its high attendance figures and negligible exclusion rates. Building from the school's vision of flourishing for all, the approach to managing conflict is very much based on repairing relationships through dialogue.

A very good range of provision has been put into place for supporting the mental health of the community, including 'Relax Kids' club and a lunchtime group run by the school's emotional literacy support assistant which is open to all. Staff have undertaken 'Trauma Informed Schools' training and have implemented the principles of this across the school.

The school's Christian vision of individual flourishing is evidenced in the inclusiveness which pervades the community. In order to broaden pupils' understanding of diversity, a wide range of visitors have been invited in to talk with pupils about ways in which they have overcome disability and difference in order to flourish personally. Pupils learn about the importance of respecting the dignity of all people across a range of curriculum topics and they exhibit very accepting attitudes within their classrooms.

Collective worship holds a valued place in the life of the school and pupils and adults describe how it is central to the embedding of the school's vision and values. The Open the Book worship which the local church leads each week is particularly appreciated by pupils and staff for the way in which the Open the Book worship team bring Bible stories to life and pupils often take part in these. A member of the clergy team holds small group discussions with pupils after each of the Open the Book worships to explore theological issues that have arisen from the story. Pupils very much enjoy the range of worship songs that have been introduced and it is clear that the whole community feels engaged in worship through these. Pupils play an active role in planning and leading the worship which takes place in the local church each term. Pupils are able to explain the trinitarian nature of God in an age appropriate way and can explain what this means for them. Prayer is a natural part of the school culture and pupils describe how they frequently create their own prayers as well as saying prayers that they have learned throughout the day.

The RE leader has been well supported in her role and has a confident overview of her subject; this was an area for improvement from the previous inspection which has been addressed. RE provision fully reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement and a well-planned curriculum ensures that pupils have the opportunity to engage reflectively with Christian concepts and develop a coherent understanding of the overarching story of the Bible. Pupils learn about a range of world religions and make thoughtful comparisons between the concepts from these and the Christian faith. Pupils reflect very thoughtfully on what the content of RE means for them personally.



**The effectiveness of RE is Good**

The quality of teaching is good in all year groups and work in pupils' books is of a good standard. Teaching is differentiated in order to enable all pupils to access the ideas being explored and there is good progress across year groups. Effective systems of assessment are in place and the subject leader uses these to gain a clear perspective on pupils' attainment.

Headteacher	Katherine McCann
Inspector's name and number	Richard Wharton - 835