

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

### Curry Mallet Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

<b>Address</b>	Lower Street, Curry Mallet, Taunton, Somerset TA3 6TA		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	11 June 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	VC primary
<b>Diocese</b>	Bath and Wells	<b>URN</b>	123751

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</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>Additional Judgement</b>		
<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

#### School context

Curry Mallet is a rural primary school with 81 pupils on roll. The school has a low level of religious and cultural diversity and no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. A new headteacher joined the school in January 2019 and an on-site pre-school was added two years ago.

#### The school's Christian vision

*We live life in all its fullness*

#### Key findings

- The school's Christian vision is an expression of its strong commitment to provide an inclusive learning environment where all can flourish
- All are warmly welcomed, highly valued and accorded the dignity they deserve. The vulnerable are cared for, the weak strengthened, and those with SEND have their needs met. The teamwork involved is exemplary.
- The inspirational leadership from the headteacher and staff has resulted in a compassionate, supportive school community which embodies what it means to live well together and in which pupils feel known and valued
- Religious education (RE) is bold and creative and staff are enthusiastic and passionate about this vital area of the curriculum. This leads to inspiring opportunities where pupils engage with each other through dialogue and debate
- Collective worship is the heartbeat of the school, with excellent teaching, encouragement, spiritual guidance and prayerful reflection inspiring all to be the best that they can be. However, secure systems of monitoring are yet to be put in place

#### Areas for development

- Deepen pupils' understanding of the theological underpinning of the vision, in order to help them explore its potential for even greater flourishing
- Ensure that all governors receive appropriate support and training to allow them to play a full part in monitoring the impact of the school's Christian vision
- Develop the RE curriculum, leading to a deeper level of theological literacy amongst pupils

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**

Curry Mallet is a friendly school which proudly lives out its inclusive Christian vision for all to flourish. Since the appointment of a new headteacher in January 2019, an understanding of the vision has quickly become established across the school community. This encompassing statement is clearly understood and valued by pupils, staff and parents. It successfully draws into one succinct expression a number of strands from the existing values and ethos statements. The biblical narrative of the loaves and fishes underpins the overarching vision, although a detailed theological understanding of this is yet to be fully embraced by all. The majority of school policies have been reviewed to reflect the vision for life in all its fullness.

The school enjoys strong partnership relationships with local churches, individuals and community groups. Pupils gain great benefit from the inspiring input from committed and skilful visitors. Staff show a strong commitment to the nurturing of pupil's spiritual awareness. Pupils are offered a wide range of opportunities for spiritual development, both through the taught curriculum and in the wider context of school life. Teachers embrace a growth mindset philosophy, where pupils are encouraged to learn from their mistakes. The use of outdoor educational facilities leads to creative expressions of art, writing and poetry. Staff believe that children learn in a different way when they are outside. Leaders say that pupils develop greater resilience when offered suitably challenging learning opportunities. Pupils respond favourably to opportunities provided by forest and outdoor schooling, being out in all weathers and through residential activities.

Members of the school council take an active role in decision-making and house captains lead worship with confidence. Examples of pupil-led initiatives include the development of a bee garden, bug hotel and an area for spiritual reflection and raising money for outdoor seating. Year 6 pupils have recently participated enthusiastically in a business challenge to raise money to pay for their visit to the Houses of Parliament.

Staff show significant skill in creating opportunities for pupils to weigh up contradictory ideas, enabling them to learn how to disagree well. Pupils confidently engage each other with informed and well-expressed arguments, debating on matters such as food miles, refugees and the environment. Discussions on moral issues in RE lessons draw on prior learning and provide fertile material for creative and experiential writing. The school is in the process of exploring ways it can help pupils to connect more directly with global issues. Of particular interest are projects that provide support for vulnerable children in developing countries.

In the context of rural Somerset, the school is proud to embrace a culture of mutual respect and understanding for diversity and difference. A recent visit to places of worship in Bristol gave pupils an opportunity to encounter people from a variety of different traditions and cultures. They talk confidently about their aspirations, growing up in a multi-cultural society. Pupils and parents value the way staff treat each individual with dignity, according to their own identity and needs. The use of restorative justice is well understood and practised by staff. The school is currently reviewing its behaviour policy to more fully reflect its vision and values.

Standards of academic attainment are broadly above national expectations and vulnerable pupils make strong progress. Over recent years the school has developed an innovative curriculum, where the pupils' own interests and concerns provide the starting point for planning. A learning journey is created that links topics to local, national and global discussions. This clearly motivates and empowers pupils to participate fully in the active process of academic development. School leaders have made good provision for pupils with special learning needs. Staff are skilled in their understanding of pupils' emotional requirements and early support is provided where needs are identified. Compassionate and appropriate intervention in a safe, reflective space is provided for pupils who are experiencing social and emotional difficulties. Particular awareness is shown to issues such as bereavement and other adverse childhood experiences detrimental to mental health and well-being.

An inclusive programme of collective worship is central to school life, offering pupils opportunities to be thoughtful, prayerful and respectful. Worship begins with a candle lighting liturgy and pupils participate wholeheartedly in prayer. Their understanding of the Trinity is well developed and they talk enthusiastically about 'God's special person, the Holy Spirit'. Worship is child centred and pupils engage attentively. A range of leaders from within and outside the school enhance the provision for worship, offering a variety of approaches. This gives pupils the chance to develop an empathetic understanding of others and a respect for the dignity of all.

School leaders and governors place a high priority on the significance of worship, but there is a lack of regularity and thoroughness in the way it is monitored and evaluated.

Religious education (RE) is well-led by a skilled and experienced teacher. The school meets its statutory expectations for RE and the subject plays an important role in the way the school lives out its Christian vision. Pupils are positive about the way the subject helps them understand religions and beliefs and they demonstrate good levels of religious literacy. Pupils especially enjoy RE visits and opportunities to debate about moral issues. RE curriculum planning is effective with coherent provision in place across key stages. However, documentation makes no reference to the Church of England Statement of Entitlement and the need to explore diverse worldviews. Books are regularly monitored by the RE lead, but assessment practice lacks clarity. Written work is mostly well presented, but some tasks offer a low level of challenge and fail to engage fully with religious texts or develop depth of theological understanding.

Headteacher	Nicola Stoddart
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