

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

### St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Child Okeford

#### Vision

'Love one another, as I have loved you' (John 13 v34)

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

#### Notable Strengths

- The school's Christian vision informs and guides the school's work. As a result, pupils and adults are flourishing in a culture where love is central to relationships.
- Trust and school leaders are effective in identifying the school's priorities for improvement through a thorough process of monitoring and evaluation. School leaders are, therefore, supported to secure improvement.
- The school's vision underpins the strong focus on inclusion and support. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are enabled to flourish.
- The vision inspires a sense of spirituality that shapes worship and impacts on the daily life of the school. This results in relationships which are dignifying and where people support one another.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum is effective. Consequently, pupils are knowledgeable about a variety of religious and non-religious world views, as well as the diversity within them.

#### Development Points

- Embed a shared approach to spirituality in ways which are consistent and explicit across the whole curriculum. This is to ensure a clear understanding for pupils of how they grow spiritually.
- Extend monitoring and evaluation to encompass the spiritual development opportunities throughout the curriculum. This is to enrich planned experiences for both pupil and adult spiritual flourishing.
- Enhance pupils' understanding of justice and responsibility beyond the school. This is to improve understanding of their ability to make a positive difference in the wider world.



## Inspection Findings

### Vision and Leadership

The school's Christian vision is firmly rooted in biblical text. It empowers the school community with inner strength and resilience, particularly through challenging times. The vision has layers of meaning which are widely understood and lived out by pupils and adults. Pupils show understanding of how the vision derives from the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet. This enhances their understanding of humility, equality and friendship, which underpins the meaning of the vision. Leadership, conducted with notable courage and compassion, demonstrates an unwavering dedication to inclusion. For example, they advocate for the provision of staffing and premises resources to meet the needs of those with SEND. Thus, the vision informs leaders' strategic decision-making, enabling pupils and adults to flourish. Sherborne Area Schools Trust (SAST) has a vision which resonates with that of the school. Their director of flourishing provides innovative and effective support to ensure success. SAST delivers a bespoke approach to robustly monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's vision. School leaders receive support which drives improvement. This approach fosters leadership and learning. Therefore, staff, pupils and their families thrive in a culture that places love at the heart of relationships.

### Vision and Curriculum

The Christian vision complements an ambitious and inclusive curriculum. This is carefully monitored and evaluated by leaders and SAST. As a result, the learning environment is reflective of the school's core values. For example, the curriculum supports the value of curiosity through enquiry-based learning. It supports the values of friendship and respect by understanding others, and community by living well together. This deliberate integration of values across the curriculum impacts positively on pupils' attitudes. They know what is expected of them and they strive to uphold the values. A range of extracurricular experiences, such as gardening club, choir and sports teams, assist pupils' personal development. Pupils' awareness of the environment is deepened through the school's forest school curriculum. SEND pupils benefit from the staff's determination to educate them with loving care through integration, alternative provision, therapy packages and timetabled sensory breaks. Pupils relate the school's chosen language for expressing spirituality through 'looking in, looking out and looking up' to aspects of collective worship and RE. Planned opportunities to explore spiritual aspects of other subjects are not commonplace. This limits pupils' understanding of spirituality. Furthermore, leaders do not monitor and evaluate spiritual development opportunities across the curriculum with sufficient rigour.

### Worship and Spirituality

Worship enriches the spiritual life of the school community, enabling people to develop as reflective and unique individuals. Worship themes are thoughtfully planned, aligning with the school's Christian vision and values. The pupils' ability to connect these values to everyday experiences, biblical narratives and the teachings of Jesus is commendable. Pupils are inspired to pray and sing with genuine enthusiasm, demonstrably contributing to their spiritual growth. The high level of pupil participation, whether through questions, prayer, or drama, deepens understanding. A phrase, used successfully to elicit deep thought across the school, is 'What makes your heart sing?' This has a positive impact on the ability of adults and pupils to express themselves spiritually. Furthermore, the use of class reflection time, individual pupil prayers and reflection areas makes a meaningful contribution to spiritual development. This thoughtful contemplation extends the impact of worship. Leaders monitor worship effectively. Use of the parish church for worship strengthens community connection and enhances the Anglican foundation of the school. Parents and carers value attending school worship in both school and church. This enables inclusion in the wider spiritual community, regardless of their individual beliefs.

### Vision and School Culture

The school's vision inspires a culture of compassion and empathy. Positive relationships are at the heart of the school community. An example is the buddy system, where pupils in Reception are guided by positive role models in Year 6. Relationships between pupils, staff, and families are consistently characterised by kindness and



partnership. This contributes to an inclusive community, underpinned by visible, approachable leadership. Staff feel supported and appreciate training led by both the diocese and SAST. Professional development, such as behaviour management and spirituality, enables them to fulfil their roles more effectively. Staff provide tailored interventions and sensitive support for pupils with learning, emotional or behavioural needs. Specialist staff and alternative provision support pupils with SEND in their learning. This leads to a culture of equity where individual needs are met through compassion and expertise. The school has a relationships policy which outlines expectations for behaviour. This emphasises the importance of everyone acting with respect. Staff, trained in therapeutic responses, shape an environment where pupils are self-aware and learn to control their emotions. Pupils, recognised in celebration assembly for displaying behaviour inspired by the school's values, inspire others. The school community engenders a sense of belonging and inclusion where individuals feel genuinely nurtured and supported.

#### Vision, Justice and Responsibility

The vision and the school's rules, to be ready, respectful and safe, underpin an active culture of justice and responsibility. Consequently, pupils are polite, take responsibility for their behaviour and are considerate of others' needs. They understand justice as being fair to others. The vision also teaches them the importance of equality. Pupils support various charitable causes. Teaching ensures awareness of ecological issues, such as ocean pollution, conserving energy resources and reducing wood waste. Pupils demonstrate responsibility for the school environment by voluntarily participating in litter-picking, and every class recycles waste paper. The school council understands itself as a 'tiny democracy'. They are proud to make their school a better place by making democratic decisions, such as choosing a charity. Pupils live out the school's vision through interactions with the local community. For example, school visits to the local residential care home develop pupils' understanding of how to treat others with love and humility. Pupils demonstrate responsibility by working with the parish council to create posters to slow down passing traffic. Despite these examples, less well developed is a sense of pupils initiating ethical choices to bring about change beyond school. The trust has secured funding for older pupils to participate in the Archbishop's Young Leaders Award (AYLA). However, as the school is only at the earliest stage of this, there is no measurable impact.

#### Religious Education

The school's RE provision is effective and aligns with the vision. The curriculum is well planned and balanced. As a result, pupils gain a nuanced understanding of Christianity, world faiths, and non-religious worldviews. Older pupils are confident in correctly using vocabulary such as monotheist, polytheist and atheist. The curriculum exposes pupils to diversity within Christianity as a global faith. Therefore, pupils develop a secure understanding of the range of beliefs held by Christians. The enquiry-led approach is especially commendable. This actively cultivates pupils' curiosity and encourages thoughtful reflection. Dedicated support within the trust contributes to cohesive and high-quality RE delivery. Ongoing professional development is effective in underpinning this commitment.

The teaching of RE is effective because pupils are engaged and remember what they have learned. At the start of each lesson, a recap of previous learning helps pupils to retain knowledge. Effective assessment in RE informs teaching and learning. This not only tracks standards but also determines what will empower pupils in their learning. They make substantial progress with their learning because of informed teaching and a balanced, well-structured curriculum.

## Information

Address	Station Road, Child Okeford, Blandford Forum, DT11 8EL		
Date	27 January 2026	URN	149656
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	125
Diocese	Salisbury		
MAT	Sherborne Area Schools Trust (SAST)		
MAT Chair	David Middleton		
Headteacher	Jill Watson		
Chair of Governors	Lauren Radburn		
Inspector	Amanda Brockway		