

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Defford-cum-Besford Church of England First School

Vision

"**Through Faith, Friendship and Fun, we Learn and Grow**" is our school's vision. We believe that it is all of our responsibility, as a school, to create an environment that allows everyone to flourish. "They are strong, like a tree planted by a river. The tree produces fruit in season, and its leaves do not die. Whatever they do prospers."

Psalm 1:3

Defford-cum-Besford Church of England First 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.

Strengths

- The Christian vision is a lived and loved reality, nourishing all aspects of the school's work. It enables staff, pupils and families to develop strong relationships and express their faith in one another and in God. This builds a cohesive environment where individuals are valued.
- As a result of the Christian vision, members of this community are treasured and nurtured. Pupils customarily treat one another with respect and responsibility. Christian values are modelled, taught and led by staff. This means that pupils, including those deemed as disadvantaged and/or vulnerable, are able to grow and flourish in harmony.
- Collective worship gently engages pupils in a spiritual journey, enabling connections to be built between biblical teachings and lived experiences. It empowers pupils to express their responses, feelings and emotions.
- Pupils are at the heart of the curriculum for religious education (RE). It fosters respect and appreciation of people of all faiths and none. Through it, pupils are encouraged to consider carefully, think deeply, and appreciate diversity.

Development Points

- Ensure that pupils have a range of first-hand experiences that will enhance their understanding of the beliefs and practices of major world faiths.
- Enable pupils to engage in matters of justice and equality on a national and global scale. This is so that they feel empowered to take action that makes a difference.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision of this small school nurtures faith, friendship and fun. It inspires the school's loving service to its diverse community. This sustains an environment in which everyone can flourish. Pupils say that their gospel-inspired vision helps them feel to secure and make progress. For leaders, the vision acts as a friend, guiding their decisions in times of change and challenge. It ensures a steady course, enhancing the work of the school and its Christian foundation. Motivated by the vision, the school is hoping to convert to primary status. This is to secure a loving environment for pupils for longer. The school's related values of perseverance, respect, friendship, truth, forgiveness and trust underpin and support the vision. These values demonstrate how the vision can be enacted in daily life. Staff find ways to use values to connect their work to parents and pupils.

Across the school's three classes, the Christian vision inspires curriculum development. Subjects are organised around learning and growing, vocabulary and spirituality. Key questions evoke wider and deeper knowledge. The school-wide focus on speaking helps pupils to discover purpose in their learning. Committed to ensuring that everyone flourishes, leaders enable bespoke provision that meets individual needs. Staff ensure purposeful provision for spiritual development. This allows pupils to linger in thought, exploring connections between the seen and unseen world. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and forest school, in particular, facilitate moments of planned and naturally occurring awe and wonder. Hence learners can stop and gaze in wonder at the sky's cumulous clouds and share their amazement together. Extra-curricular clubs, such as the nativity and music clubs, enable pupils to develop their personal and social skills further. These elements achieve effective academic and spiritual development for pupils, including those who are deemed to be vulnerable and/or disadvantaged.

Steered by the Christian vision, staff, governors, and the local church collaborate to create a strong worship identity for the school. Inclusive and inspirational worship offers space for experiencing the Christian story, consideration of Christian values and learning about worldwide events. Pupils are invited to reflect on biblical messages and to lead and take part in prayer. The school has developed a shared definition of spirituality and, consequently, there is a strong commitment to community and togetherness. Pupils enjoy active participation, discussing their understanding or making observations. Staff and governors consistently monitor the effectiveness of worship so that it evolves purposefully. Pupils and staff particularly enjoy the new 'attitude to gratitude' times where they can publicly express their thanks to others. Parents appreciate the opportunity to join in celebration worship. Collective worship ensures an invitation to experience God's presence, power and peace. This rich provision enables the school community to grow and develop spiritually.

The school's nurturing ethos has its foundation in the Christian vision that helps everyone to learn and grow. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive sensitive and effective provision. Staff are calm, dedicated and kind. They feel valued and supported in their roles and feel fortunate to work here. They are excellent examples for pupils who, in turn, treat one another well. Staff commitment to the vision means that good mental health is a priority. The culture of respectful care ensures that people look out for one another and are quick to lend support. Welfare needs amongst staff, pupils and families are identified and swiftly addressed. Pupils are encouraged to recognise and reject any form of bullying and say harmful behaviour is very rare. Staff model assertive but considerate language for pupils so that they are able to disagree well. Even the youngest pupils are able to use sentence stems such as, 'I respectfully disagree...'. As a consequence, pupils negotiate friendships and relationships across their age groups and the school operates as a harmonious whole.

A culture of justice and responsibility is palpable. Older pupils willingly help younger pupils to cut up their food at lunchtimes. High quality training through the diocese and the local church has deepened leaders' understanding of



their Christian calling. Staff are energised by their service to their diverse community. They try always to be thoughtful for their families and, consequently, relationships are strong. Families reciprocate this trust and friendship. Remembrance Day is marked with RAF Defford. This honours the community and help pupils to understand the ethics and impact of war. Opportunities to learn about matters of justice mean that pupils can make a difference in their community. Pupils in the Agents of Change club have been involved in supporting their local foodbank. Some pupils are passionate about the effect on local wildlife of a proposed new build on the school site. They have shared their concerns and ideas with leaders. Older pupils regularly discuss global events. Their opportunities to be voices for change in matters of national and worldwide significance are less well developed.

High quality teaching in RE prioritises opportunities for pupils to share their perceptions. This means that learning is meaningful for them and enables them to flourish. In order to understand the Hindu belief in one god expressed in many forms, pupils considered their own different identities. Pupils are encouraged to think widely and deeply about big questions, fostering personal consideration and respect for others. Pupils in Key Stage 1 were able to grapple with the meaning of a saviour as a protector. Pupils recognise Christianity as a worldwide faith. They have a secure understanding of some of the similarities and differences between religions. They can talk confidently about the different places of worship, holy scriptures and some ways in which people express their faith. They also appreciate that people within a religion will not think in exactly the same way. Leaders are auditing the curriculum to see how pupils' understanding of world faiths can be developed further. Planned opportunities to appreciate other religions and worldviews more deeply are less developed. Valuable professional development from the diocese ensures that RE makes a significant contribution to pupil flourishing.

Information

Address	Hill View Defford Worcester WR8 9BH		
Date	13 November 2024	URN	116802
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	46
Diocese/District	Worcester		
Headteacher	Tom Holdstock		
Chair of Governors	Sue Rees		
Inspector	Bridget Knight		