

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Flax Bourton Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	Flax Bourton, Bristol, BS48 1UA
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	Excellent
The impact of collective worship	Excellent

School's vision
At Flax we will be aiming high, respecting others, having fun as we are growing together towards 'Life in all its fullness' (John 10: 10)
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong leadership ensures that the school's deeply Christian vision and values are at the heart of its enabling pupils and adults to flourish. • Collective worship is outstanding in encouraging pupils to flourish through the development of personal spirituality alongside social action. • Religious education (RE) reflects the Christian vision by providing pupils with a rich awareness of Christianity as a living world religion. • The school community is effecting social change locally, but global awareness is not strong. • The values supporting the vision are complicated in their design resulting in potential confusion.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a wider global perspective in order to support pupils' desire to bring about world-changing social action. This will enable pupils to further grow towards attaining life in all its fullness. • Refine the design of the school and Christian values in order to better support their ease of use and understanding.

Inspection findings

Flax Bourton Church of England school has a deeply held, theologically based, Christian vision that is the essence of everything it is and does. The vision is known by everyone and lived out daily, enabling all to flourish. This is evidenced by the holistic progress made by all pupils, whatever their abilities or faith. The school is led by an experienced and passionate headteacher whose positivity permeates the whole school. Staff say that, 'the caring starts at the top.' Governors are also led by a very experienced and committed chair. Through their ethos committee, governors effectively monitor and record the impact of their decisions and the outstanding progress of the school as a church school.

In line with their vision, leaders change lives for the better, basing all their decisions on what is best for pupils and staff. Leaders demonstrated this by responding with resilience to the recent rapid growth of the school, turning potential challenge into opportunity. Adults report that the Christian ethos of the school has strengthened during this growth. The beautiful school site has changed with building extensions and hugely successful reimagining of its use. Here, God's world can be explored in lessons and free time encouraging awe and wonder in its forest and reflection areas. The whole site is available to pupils during the day and it is used respectfully and with love. Care for God's world is constantly shown by pupils and includes them insisting that the recent firework display should be carbon neutral. Impressively, the curriculum has similarly undergone development and includes forest school, yoga and meditation for wellbeing. This has further supported excellent pupil progress. Facilities are exceptionally good. Early years children have outstanding opportunities for learning through play. Pupils are encouraged to ask God to help the world, but global awareness is not strong.

Meaningful relationships enable all to flourish. Leaders successfully support pupils and adults to be the very best they can be. Staff say that they are there for the children and each other and are encouraged and supported to develop their skills and talents. They say that they are 'amazingly well cared for' and supported through professional and personal challenges in a totally non-judgemental and loving way. The sense of belonging to this school family and pride in it, is felt and expressed by pupils, staff and governors.

With its deeply loving culture, respecting everyone, this is a totally inclusive school. All pupils and families are well-known and cared about. Individual pupils identified as having special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) are supported with highly successful, carefully chosen interventions and resources. Everyone's wellbeing is a priority of the school. All transition is carefully planned. The creative school curriculum, calming presence of the school dog, chickens and guinea pigs, and the wearing of slippers indoors, support pupils to be ready to learn. Challenging situations and behaviours are always responded to with love. Leaders invest in providing what is needed by every pupil for them to flourish, as all are equally loved by God. Ukrainian children were immediately welcomed into the school and embraced as being equal members of the family.

The school successfully responds to need where it is found believing that pupils must 'be in the right place' in order to learn. Parents say that staff have supported pupils' families through times of tragedy and sadness, personal and national. They have reached out to vulnerable families throughout the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis providing food and IT support. Wrap around care is available and parents appreciate how staff always go 'the extra mile'. Leaders ensure that every child can participate in school events and trips through the appropriate use of additional funding sources including the parents and teachers association.

Because of the strength of the Christian vision in school, pupil behaviour is good. Pupils care

about each other, 'just like the good Samaritan did.' Pupils flourish when accepting classroom responsibilities and through a strong buddy scheme operating between Year 6 and Reception pupils. This support for new pupils makes a positive difference to everyone involved.

School believes that the development of personal spirituality is fundamentally important. Prayer and reflection are an important part of everyday life and some children now pray at home, too. There are well-used and inspiring resourced reflection areas in every classroom with boxes of thought-provoking moral and religious books. Included are bibles, story books and books of pupils' own prayers which they enjoy writing and using. Pupils are also invited to extemporise in prayer. Communal prayers are regularly said at different points of the day and pupils know the Lord's prayer. The new outdoor reflection area, requested by pupils, is used a lot by them and staff. Reflection areas are always available.

Collective worship, is a central part of the school day. Children enjoy worship, regularly planning and leading it themselves. Pupils designed a highly effective collective worship on Advent traditions and their meanings. Worship is invitational, inclusive and inspires pupils to have a strong sense of Christian justice. For example, raising money to respond to the crisis in Ukraine. Elements of Anglican tradition are a regular part of worship and pupils understand about God as being three in one, and are familiar with the stories of Jesus. Collective worship continued throughout lockdown, linking school with parish worship and allowing participation from families abroad.

RE is delivered in an environment where pupils feel safe to express themselves. This reinforces the inclusivity in this school. Pupils are encouraged to reflect deeply on big questions. For example, pupils described God as 'planet maker' and Jesus as 'grave buster'. The curriculum introduces pupils to a range of faiths, studying them alongside Christianity, and is enhanced by trips. Recently one enabled a pupil with different beliefs to demonstrate their faith to their peers. Visitors from a wide range of faiths also support the RE curriculum and collective worship adding to the richness of the respectful school culture.

In line with their vision, the school works extremely closely with partners to enable everyone to flourish. Pupils participated in the appointment of the new parish priest. He now leads collective worship and delivers lessons in school. Pupils visit church for worship and special events and their work and prayers are permanently displayed there. Membership of the Lighthouse Schools Partnership and close working with the diocese provide both educational and training support.

This is an overwhelmingly calm and effective school driven by its Christian vision where everyone is treasured, and doors are always open. Parents say how much they love the school and all it does for them and their children.



Information			
School	Flax Bourton Church of England VC Primary School	Inspection date	8 December 2022
URN	145445	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Bath & Wells	Pupils on roll	210
MAT/Federation	Lighthouse Schools Partnership		
Headteacher	Jane Bennett		
Chair of Governors	Ruth Newton		
Inspector	Alison Appleyard	No.	877