

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Dolton Church of England Primary School			
Address	The Square, Dolton, Winkleigh, Devon EX19 8Q'F		
Date of inspection	2 October 2019	Status of school	Primary Academy inspected as VA Alumnis Multi Academy Trust.
Diocese / Methodist District	Exeter Diocese	URN	145770

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

School context

Dolton is a rural primary school and pre-school with 39 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage, and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. The headteacher was appointed in September 2018, and is also headteacher of Clinton Church of England Primary School. Both schools joined the Alumnis Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) in October 2018. Pupil numbers are slowly increasing.

The school's Christian vision

'Together we nurture, love and learn whilst aspiring for excellence'
 Christian values: Respect, courage, aspiration, friendship and forgiveness
 The vision is inspired by Colossians 2 v6-7 'Keep your roots deep in Jesus, build your lives on him'

Key findings

- Focused action by school leaders has led to rapid improvement in school effectiveness, allowing pupils to flourish.
- The school's Christian vision drives very good relationships, meaning that pupils and staff feel supported and nurtured.
- An innovative curriculum, driven by Christian values, puts Religious Education (RE) at the heart of learning. This allows pupils to aspire to do their best academically and to develop spiritually.
- The school is at the centre of the local community. Volunteers are key in enabling the school to work towards fulfilling its vision, so that pupils are nurtured and aspire for excellence. Collective worship is enhanced by the contribution of the vicar and members of the congregation.
- Support from the board of governors of the MAT plays a key part in the school fulfilling its vision. The local school committee (LSC), is still developing its strategic role in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the Christian vision.

Areas for development

- Further embed the new Devon agreed religious education (RE) syllabus so that pupils can improve their ability to make connections within and between religions.
- Further develop the involvement of LSC governors in the strategic overview of the school's Christian character so that their evaluations have a positive impact in helping the school to fulfil its Christian vision.
- Develop innovative opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge of the Christian Eucharist

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

Dolton school is at the heart of the village. Since the last inspection, school leaders have worked with the whole school community, parents and the church to establish a strong Christian vision which everyone supports. This has led to clear improvement in both academic achievement and school ethos. The leadership team clearly articulates how the school vision is based on being rooted in the teaching of Jesus and following his example. The whole school community applies the vision and associated values to their daily lives and learning in school, meaning that relationships are strong and everyone lives well together, treating each other with dignity and respect. The vision drives all school policies and practice, resulting in pupils feeling secure and nurtured, and staff being well supported, working well as a team. The local community is very supportive of the school, attending key celebrations and providing a volunteer-led breakfast club and after school clubs, giving valuable help to local families. RE is a key component of the curriculum and makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development by allowing them to think deeply about ethical and philosophical issues. The school has a strong partnership with the local church, and pupils attend worship there every week, led by the minister. Worship is respectful and inclusive, and is valued by the whole school community. Collective worship helps to explain the school's Christian values, allowing pupils to explore how to apply these to their daily lives. Leaders ensure that staff receive training, working with the Diocese so that they can fully contribute to school improvement and develop as Church school leaders. School leaders have fully addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection, and the MAT governing board have made many positive contributions to evaluating and improving the Christian character of the school, in line with the Christian vision. The relatively new local school committee's strategic role in this respect is less well developed.

School leaders have designed an innovative curriculum, in line with the Christian vision, which puts the spiritual development of pupils at its core. The curriculum is built around themes of stewardship, social justice and service which echo its vision and values. This enables pupils to explore big questions and to engage in social action in response. For example, pupils raise funds to sponsor a child from Uganda to attend school, and have campaigned to buy fruit consumed at school from a Fairtrade source. In this way, pupils are encouraged to think about global issues and to develop their understanding of disadvantage and deprivation, taking action as a result of their concerns. The curriculum engages and enthuses pupils who achieve and develop well spiritually as a result. Staff are aspirational for all pupils, including vulnerable pupils and those with a special educational need or disability (SEND). These pupils are well supported. The volunteer-led breakfast club is key for helping all pupils to achieve their best. In this way, community support helps the school to achieve its vision to 'nurture, love and learn', supporting pupils so that they can aspire to excellence.

Pupils behave very well at school. They feel safe and secure, and school behaviour policies and practice are based on forgiveness and reconciliation which, in turn, help to promote excellent relationships. All members of the school community talk about being a 'family', and pupils of different age groups support and befriend each other. The school leadership fully supports the wellbeing of pupils and staff, and gives exceptional support to those going through difficult personal circumstances, fulfilling their vision to love and nurture. Pupils, parents and staff feel listened to and contribute fully to school decision making. An ethos group, comprised of pupils from across the age-range, discuss issues of concern, and these are acted on by the headteacher and the LSC. Pupils show respect for difference, and understand the diverse nature of today's UK population, studying world religions, cultures and practices in RE. They visit London, Exeter and other more diverse areas of the country. In this way, pupils fulfil the school's vision to understand and show respect and friendship to those who are different from themselves.

Collective worship is central to the life of the school. It is well planned, and good quality training enables staff to provide meaningful and inspirational worship for pupils. Pupils and staff engage enthusiastically in worship which is varied and inspires thoughtful reflection and prayer. Staff and pupils are involved in planning and presenting the daily act of worship which often helps pupils to think about their own values and behaviour and attitudes. Creative areas of reflection are available in all classrooms. Pupils use these as a calm space to think, relax, and pray. The school has yet to integrate aspects of the Eucharist into the worship experience of its pupils, or to be made fully aware of its importance to the Christian community in RE. Pupils are knowledgeable and articulate about Bible stories and theological concepts such as salvation, the Trinity and prayer. They make insightful connections between Bible characters and the school's Christian values. Some pupils are confident about saying

they have no religious belief, but are happy to think about the beliefs of others and consider the relevance to their own lives. They see collective worship as inclusive of all members of the school community, and value opportunities to either reflect or pray, depending on their beliefs. In this way, invitational opportunities for worship at the school enable pupils to develop well spiritually.

RE drives and underpins the core curriculum themes, and makes connections with the Christian values of the school. It is well planned and led, and gives pupils a safe space in which to explore their own views and opinions. RE provides pupils with insights into world religions and world views, and artefacts are used creatively to inspire pupils' imagination and understanding. Pupils have a sound understanding of core theological ideas in Christianity, but are less able to make connections within and between religions. Assessment in RE enables teachers to effectively judge attainment and progress in RE, and to help pupils to improve, and to aspire to excellence. The RE lead teacher regularly shares good practice in the subject and exchanges ideas with other schools in the MAT, ensuring good quality provision.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

RE is well taught by staff at Dolton school. The well-planned and thorough systems of assessment in the subject enable staff to accurately monitor and judge attainment, which is good in both key stages. All pupils, including vulnerable pupils and SEND make good progress in RE

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