



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

**Marhamchurch Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Address Helebridge Road, Marhamchurch, Bude, EX23 0HY

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** **Good**

**The impact of collective worship** **Good**

**School’s vision**

‘Together, we can achieve and succeed with God by our side.’

At Marhamchurch, we aim to work together as a team following Jesus' example to feed our children with wisdom, knowledge and skills. We believe that with hard work, compassion in our hearts and a willingness to help each other, each of our individual aspirations are achievable.

**Key findings**

- The school’s Christian vision plays an influential role in shaping this warm, caring community. All show respect and dignity for one another. Pupils recognise how the vision and Christian values shape their behaviour and thinking.
- The partnerships which the school has created enable them to make enhanced progress, creating a culture of flourishing. The Celtic Cross multi-academy trust (Trust) plays a fundamental role in this with support at various levels. However, there are insufficient opportunities in school to enrich pupils’ understanding of different communities, either nationally or globally. In addition, pupils’ understanding of disadvantage and deprivation is not fully developed.
- The pupil voice and contribution the school council makes to the school and the local community is impressive. Members are determined advocates for change, creating a culture which encourages others to champion their own issues. At present there are few high quality opportunities to explore spirituality which allow pupils to express their deepening thinking in creative ways.
- Leaders are passionate and dedicated to the work of being a Church school. They have raised pupils’ aspirations, particularly through collective worship, to be the best that they can be, enabling all to flourish.
- The vision gives a high priority to religious education (RE). There are examples of high quality practice, such as the use of big questions and the depth of pupils' responses. However, pupils are not confident to talk about world faiths in any depth.

## Areas for development

- Create a range of opportunities for pupils to explore different communities, both nationally and globally, to deepen their understanding of disadvantage and deprivation.
- Provide high quality opportunities which allow pupils to deepen their understanding of world faiths so they can explain how people's beliefs shape their actions and behaviour.
- Ensure that stimulating and interactive experiences which enrich pupils' understanding of spirituality are planned across the curriculum, enabling them to express their thinking in a variety of creative ways.

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

Marhamchurch joining the trust and appointing a new head of school brought renewed clear focus to being a Church school. The head of school is passionate, dedicated to providing the highest quality of education, enabling pupils to achieve and flourish. This leads to ongoing improvements, with examples of high quality practice established. Pupils played a major role in creating a distinctive Christian vision of which they have a real ownership. Leaders confidently articulate a good understanding of biblical principles underpinning the vision. They refer to the feeding of the five thousand. Pupils make thoughtful links to how Jesus and the disciples worked together, following God's example and made a difference to so many. They see that using their different gifts enables them to help their neighbours. Pupils show their understanding of the vision using the picture of a tree growing, comparing this with their own growth, with roots grounded in the community. Its branches represent the Christian values, which pupils say shape their actions and attitudes. A cohesive staff team is established which shares this vision and live out the values. The Christian vision highlights that each is special to God. Staff share a range of examples where they have been enabled to flourish.

Significant partnerships are central to the school's development and drawn from the school's vision. The vision highlights feeding one another, sharing good practice and learning from others. The trust provides support in a number of areas, whilst the school shares its expertise with others. Trust advisers work closely with staff reviewing pupil progress and supporting new initiatives. The monitoring council works closely with local dedicated and enthusiastic governors in making evaluations. All aspects of being a Church school are regularly reviewed and targets set. Staff take on greater roles of responsibility through the trust's network of schools, becoming leaders in other Church schools. The trust's Christian distinctiveness adviser brings a wealth of experience, raising staff knowledge and providing rich resources. This led to new initiatives, such as 'Understanding Christianity', an RE resource being embedded. Subject leaders work effectively with schools in the trust, sharing good practice, which enriches provision. The school's commitment to the local community is impressive, playing a fundamental role. Its relationship with the church is rich, contributing to the celebration of Christian festivals. The church contributes to governance and weekly Open the Book worship, which is highly anticipated. The Diocese actively supports through focused training and visits. Qualified counsellors, using the school's 'Trauma Informed Schools' strategies, screen pupils for their emotional needs and take action required. This reflects the vision of feeding and meeting pupils' needs. This is very effective, ensuring that pupils are ready for learning.

Staff went beyond expectations during the pandemic with weekly visits to families providing resources and nurturing wellbeing. However, there are limited opportunities to explore other communities, either nationally or globally. Pupils do not have a fully developed understanding of disadvantage and deprivation.

A new curriculum is being shaped which reflects the vision in that it is enabling pupils to achieve and fulfil their potential. The nurture for vulnerable pupils is most effective, with the vast majority making either expected or accelerated progress. A range of opportunities allow pupils to develop their talents, such as sporting or musical. Pupils' aspirations

are enhanced through developing skills which will help with their learning. For each lesson a key learning skill is highlighted, such as reason or perseverance. Pupils develop an understanding of which skills can be used in specific learning situations, enabling them to be lifelong learners. The provision for spirituality has been enhanced with the introduction of strategies to help pupils to reflect and determine how they might respond to new ideas. This approach is used across the curriculum, becoming increasingly valued. However, there are still insufficient high quality experiences to develop spirituality, nor are opportunities identified in planning. Pupils are not able to express their ideas in creative ways.

The importance of family and community is emphasised in the vision, it is tangible across daily life. Pupils' behaviour is particularly good, they treat one another with dignity and respect. This comes from the vision of working together and sharing one another's talents. The quality of work the school council does is excellent. For three years they have held a platinum award, a national accreditation for pupil voice, sharing their expertise county wide. The school council selects charities to support and plan actions. They instigated online garden and activity sessions during the pandemic. Modelling by the council encourages others to be advocates for change. More pupils are taking the initiative to support their important causes. The council's eco element is active in taking care of God's world.

There are a number of high quality features in the teaching of RE which are expertly developed by the subject leader. Pupils enjoy the challenges of responding to big questions of meaning and purpose, their depth of thinking is good. They feel it is a safe space to share, refining their thinking and learning to disagree positively. Pupils have good critical evaluation skills and recognise the contribution Christianity can make to contemporary thinking. For each RE unit guidance provided effectively extends pupils' knowledge and thinking, accelerating progress. Key religious language is explained extending pupils' understanding of specific vocabulary. These guides are shared across the county by the Diocese. This reflects the school's vision of sharing with and feeding others. Leaders are enthusiastic, introducing new initiatives, for example, creatively weaving RE into other areas, such as forest school, raising its relevance. Assessment strategies are securely in place with evaluations informing planning. Pupils have an understanding of other world faiths. However, there are insufficient high quality experiences to allow pupils to talk about these in depth and how they shape the actions of others.

Collective worship is inclusive and invitational. It plays a central role in deepening pupils' understanding of the vision and what this looks like in daily life. Pupils explain that exploring Christian values helps them to see what God would like them to do. Key themes developed at the start of the week are explored in class worship, which leads to pupils taking action or changing how they might do something. Each class nominates a peer who shows the value in action for an award in celebration worship, this effectively raises the importance of values. Pupils are increasingly involved in leading worship independently, taking greater ownership. Opportunities for reflection are valued, helping pupils to feel calm. Many find prayer helpful in expressing their ideas in different ways. Pupils know the significance of the main Christian festivals. They also have an age appropriate understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Older pupils take an active role in the Eucharist, receiving communion, aware of its importance for Christians. Planning for worship is detailed, supporting class worship, a recent development. Monitoring and evaluation is secure supported by regular pupil reviews, leading to ongoing improvements.

### Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	17 March 2022	URN	144063
Date of previous inspection	23 March 2015		
School status	Voluntary controlled academy converter primary school	NOR	141
Name of MAT/Federation	Celtic Cross Education		
Diocese	Truro		
Headteacher	Darren Hoare		

Pupil profile	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 above national averages.		
Inspector's name	David Hatrey	No.	844