

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Johns CofE VC Primary School, Kidderminster	
Address	Blakebrook, DY11 6AP
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
<p>Shaping lives. Shaping futures</p> <p>Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it.</p> <p>(Proverbs 22:6)</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aspirational vision has underpinned the challenges that leaders have overcome on their successful journey for school improvement. Whilst the vision is embedded, formal monitoring of the impact of actions taken, is not fully developed. • The curriculum, shaped by the Christian vision, provides rich learning experiences. Intentional opportunities for spiritual development and exploring diversity are well developed. • The school is committed to the wellbeing of everyone in the school community and there is a strong focus on promoting mental health. The school is addressing the needs of all, including the most vulnerable, well. • Collective worship is the practical outworking of the school values of love, friendship, truthfulness and forgiveness and contributes to the understanding of the Christian vision. Pupils are involved in the delivery of worship but opportunities for pupils to plan are not yet embedded • Religious education (RE) is led well. Clear systems are in place to support teachers with planning and developing their subject knowledge. The assessment of RE is less well developed in order to accurately inform pupils and teachers of progress in this key subject.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop formal procedures for monitoring church school effectiveness in order to fully evaluate the impact of actions taken. • Enhance worship by increasing pupils' role in planning and leading so that worship is more engaging at all levels • Embed the assessment of RE in order to inform pupils and teachers of ongoing progress and outcomes, enabling all to flourish.



Inspection findings

St John's school has been through a time of great change. In 2019, the school's Christian vision, Shaping Lives, Shaping Futures was developed to guide the school through a phase of intense regeneration. With great success, the aspirational vision has underpinned the challenges that leaders have overcome and remained at the heart of moving the school forward. Leaders and staff continue to work relentlessly to improve outcomes and as a result, pupils and adults are flourishing.

School leaders have been well supported by the Multi Academy Trust on their journey of school improvement. Leaders' knowledge of church school effectiveness has been enhanced through accessing high quality training from the Diocese of Worcester. As a result, religious education (RE), spirituality and collective worship have all been further developed. Governors are regularly involved in school activities and are committed to school improvement. Governors passionately support the ethos of the school. However, robust systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions taken, is not yet fully embedded.

Because everyone is valued, pastoral support for pupils and staff is strong. Time and resources are carefully planned to support good mental health. Leaders are mindful and responsive to staff workload and as a result, staff feel valued. Behaviour of pupils is nurtured and shaped through secure and trusted relationships, underpinned by the core Christian values. Additional support is sourced for those pupils who need it most and as a result, the school is calm and conducive to learning. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and supported to ensure that they can contribute fully to their learning. A specially developed quiet area, The Zen Den supports social skills, allowing time, space and support for pupils who need it. The school embraces difference and all pupils are valued. The four school values of love, truthfulness, forgiveness and friendship encourage pupils to practice reconciliation and enable all to live well together. This has created a culture of respect and dignity demonstrated through positive relationships and behaviour of pupils.

St Johns' broad and ambitious curriculum is underpinned by the vision, ensuring the nurturing of the whole child and preparing them for the future. All pupils including those with special educational needs and disability (SEND) have their learning needs met and make good progress. Staff have a shared understanding of spiritual development and, as a result, learning opportunities are both planned and spontaneous. Planned opportunities for spirituality are mapped throughout the curriculum and are intrinsic to learning across all subjects. 'Big questions' woven into the curriculum, enable pupils to think deeply, critically and to be reflective. Experiences that occur naturally throughout the day are valued, giving pupils time to reflect and discuss their thoughts .

Opportunities to engage in social action and understand how pupils can challenge injustice are emerging. The school engages in charity events such as Red Nose day, Children in Need and Poppy Appeal and the local Rudolph Run. Through exploring wider global issues, pupils are beginning to look beyond themselves and develop an understanding of disadvantage and inequality. In response pupils are beginning to see themselves as courageous advocates who are agents of change.

The school's identity as a Church school is greatly enhanced by its close partnership with the nearby church of St Johns. Pupils refer to it as 'our church'. A highlight for pupils and staff are the regular visits to church and the opportunity for pupils to lead worship. Parents are encouraged to attend. The rector, who is also a foundation governor, is a much-loved member of the school community. He is readily available to support the spiritual needs of the community. Worship in school, led by the church, regularly inspires all. As a consequence,

pupils and adults have a good understanding and appreciation of Anglican worship.

They appreciate the opportunities for deep reflection which allow them time to consider alternative ways of thinking and being. Pupils draw on this knowledge when facing difficult circumstances in their own lives. The teachings of Jesus underpin the outworking of the vision to 'start children off on the way they should go' (Proverbs 22:6). Learning is carefully planned and skillfully links Bible stories to actions and events relevant to the pupils. Pupils are involved in the leading and evaluation of worship, however opportunities to plan for worship are limited.

Pupils enjoy RE lessons. RE is well led and fulfils statutory requirements. The RE lead is well supported in her role and engages with training from the Diocese. Leaders of the school have made sure that all staff have access to professional development opportunities to support them in their teaching of RE. The planning of RE is effective and progressive throughout the school. However, systems that enable teachers to know how well pupils learn in RE, are less well developed. The work in the Early Years is evidenced in class Big Books and demonstrates how RE is age appropriate. Pupils understand the importance of learning about different faiths and how this helps them to form their own beliefs whilst accepting others points of view.

Parents talk passionately of the school and how leaders and staff enable children to flourish academically, morally and spiritually. The school vision and associated values are lived out in relationships. Because staff know pupils so well, pupils are confident to talk openly with adults. They know who they can go to and that any concerns will be taken seriously.

Staff at St Johns describe themselves as a family. They support and care for each other, bound by a common purpose of nurturing and educating children. The school has overcome many challenges with grace and determination. Through strong relationships underpinned by their core values of love, truthfulness, friendship and forgiveness, 'Shaping lives. Shaping futures' is a lived reality in this school.

Information			
School	St Johns CofE VC Primary School, Kidderminster	Inspection date	6 February 2023
URN	144999	VC/VA/Academy	
Diocese/District	Worcester	Pupils on roll	334
MAT/Federation	The Spire Church of England Learning Trust		
Headteacher	Caroline Lowe		
Chair of Governors	Tim Williams		
Inspector	Charlotte Taylor	No.	2117