

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>Burlescombe Church of England Primary School</b>			
<b>Address</b>	Burlescombe, Tiverton, Devon EX16 7JH		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	29 April 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	VC primary
<b>Diocese</b>	Exeter Diocese	<b>URN</b>	113350

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
<b>Additional Judgement</b>		
<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

Burlescombe is a small, rural, village primary school with 58 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 (SEND) is above national averages. The school is in a federation with Webber's Church of England Primary School, and together they form The Valley Partnership. An executive headteacher leads both schools. The Religious Education (RE) coordinator has been in post since September 2018.

### The school's Christian vision

'Climb to your highest ... for yourself, for others and for God', which is characterised by the Christian values of: trust, truthfulness, responsibility, perseverance, forgiveness, courage, compassion, creativity and love, which encompasses them all.

### Key findings

- The school's Christian vision strongly influences its nurturing, family-centred ethos. This is lived out by the staff, who provide an atmosphere of support and encouragement, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils. However, the theological underpinning of the vision is yet to be fully understood by the whole school community.
- The school prioritises pupils' spiritual development as part of its Christian vision. Pupils are taught to understand their own lives and emotions, then to reach out to others and the world around them.
- As well as raising academic standards, the school leadership team have strengthened the Christian distinctiveness and ethos of the school through their tireless energy, and close attention to the curriculum, including quality Religious Education (RE).
- Varied, inspirational collective worship is the heartbeat of the school. This is a significant area of strength, developing pupils' spirituality and making links across the school and with the local community.
- The school is outward-looking and values teamwork. It is effective in all its working partnerships including with parents, local churches and the diocese, bringing positive benefits to pupils and the local community.

### Areas for development

- Ensure that the theological underpinning of the vision is widely shared and understood so that the whole school community understands how it impacts school life.
- Strengthen the provision of appropriate assessment in RE. Ensure that pupils' progress can be monitored more effectively and pupils supported to improve their skills in exploring and evaluating new ideas.
- Strengthen formal systems for governors to monitor and evaluate the Christian distinctiveness of the school and collective worship so that they are better informed to contribute to development planning.

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

At this school, leaders are inspired by their Christian vision to be particularly welcoming to vulnerable pupils and those with SEND, so that pupils of all abilities are able to 'climb to their highest'. Serving these pupils is a strength of this Church school. Vulnerable pupils are able to achieve well due to an impressive range of valuable support systems. These include the work of well-qualified and caring teaching assistants, extra help before and after school and strong pastoral support. The vision is underpinned by Jesus' commandments 'Love God, and love your neighbour as yourself', and is at the centre of every aspect of school life. This is clearly understood by most staff, who say that 'climb to your highest' is '...about character as well as academic work'. However, some parents and newer members of the governing board have yet to fully understand the theological context of the vision.

Inspirational and reflective collective worship is at the core of school life. Through worship, pupils develop their own spirituality as well as supporting each other and looking out to the wider world. RE is given appropriate curriculum time. It deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and world religions and their impact on people's lives. Pupils link their learning to the school vision, saying 'learning about Jesus ...inspires us to do the right thing and help others'. For example, older pupils explain how they help younger children at playtime.

Leaders ensure that key staff attend training offered by the diocese. Robust strategic planning is providing strong church school leadership into the future. The school fulfils its vision by working closely with the community and local churches for the benefit of all the pupils. For example, parents assisting with after-school clubs, the local minister contributing to collective worship, and Open the Book teams from the local church. Teachers work closely with staff at Webber's School to share good practice, promoting the well-being and good academic progress of pupils. Governors are committed to the school and visit often, monitoring progress in termly meetings with school leaders. Their role in formally evaluating the Christian distinctiveness of the school and collective worship is less well defined. The recommendations from the previous SIAMS inspection have largely been met.

The curriculum at the school is well balanced, inspiring and linked to the vision to 'climb to your highest', enabling pupils to flourish academically and spiritually. It helps them to look beyond their small community. Highly committed staff have ensured improved academic progress in recent years from pupils of all abilities, including vulnerable pupils and those with SEND. Pupils explore global issues in extra-curricular activities such as residential and clubs after school, acting to help those outside of their own community. Staff and pupils have a strong, shared understanding of what spiritual development is, linking this to their school vision. A wealth of activities are provided across the curriculum and after school to promote spiritual development and mental health, including the 'We Eat Elephants' programme, and calm reflection spaces for each class. As a result, pupils develop well spiritually, and are very aware of their own needs and emotions, and those of their peers.

Behaviour is very good, meaning that pupils are interested and attentive in lessons and that they learn and achieve well. Bullying is exceptionally rare, and older children speak of how they support younger members of the school. Pupils can explain how the school vision and values, and the way that these are exemplified for them through Bible stories, help them to make choices about their lives, their learning and how they treat others. They are motivated to social action by themes in the curriculum and collective worship, for example Jesus' parables related to forgiveness. Pupils are encouraged and supported to live out the school vision by thinking globally and acting on their beliefs. For example, a fundraising event held at school for one concerned pupil to support an endangered species.

The headteacher gives excellent, caring support to her staff, which in turn sets the pattern for teachers treating the pupils with respect and understanding, ensuring their wellbeing and mental health needs are met. Communication with parents is very good, meaning that concerns are dealt with promptly. Pupils, staff and parents feel able to express their views and opinions. This leads to the school being a happy, caring and nurturing

place to work and learn. Pupils who have particular needs regarding behaviour or attendance are given extra specialist help, resulting in families feeling supported and pupils able to achieve their best.

Prayer is a natural part of the school day and pupils of all faiths, or none, are able to take part with integrity. Collective worship meets statutory obligations, is inspiring, inclusive and sets the tone for the ethos of the school. All teaching staff are involved in planning and leading worship, sometimes helped by pupils. Both pupils and staff enjoy worship as a time to come together as a community, examining their shared Christian values and celebrating achievements. Pupils participate enthusiastically by assisting, praying, and joyful singing. In this way, pupils experience the varied traditions of Anglican worship. Worship is highly creative, and Bible passages are enacted and explained, inspiring the pupils to social action. Christian festivals are celebrated with the community at the local church, building strong links between the church and the school. Pupils develop a good understanding of Christian themes such as the Trinity and Holy Communion by visiting the local church and examining artefacts with the minister. Pupils and staff discuss worship informally, but formal evaluation is less well developed.

Good teaching in RE helps pupils show a respectful understanding of difference and diversity in this small village school. Pupils are able to reflect on their own religious or spiritual views and consider those from a range of cultures and faiths. Pupils reflect, discuss and write about Bible stories, meaning that they have a good knowledge of theological concepts. Leadership of RE is effective, ensuring that good practice is shared within The Valley Partnership to improve learning. Assessment in RE is in its infancy. Further development is needed to allow teachers to understand how pupils can improve and progress, particularly in their evaluation skills.

Executive Headteacher	Deborah Eveleigh
Inspector's name and number	Judith Larrington 948