

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

<b>St George's Church of England Infant School</b>			
Address	Jackets Lane, Northam, Bideford, EX39 1HT		
Date of inspection	04 February 2020	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary
Diocese	<b>Exeter</b>	URN	<b>113456</b>

<b>Overall Judgement</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>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Additional Judgements</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
	<b>The effectiveness of religious education (RE)</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

St George's is an infant school with 161 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. 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. The school federated with nearby St Margaret's Church of England Junior School in September 2015 to form the Northam Schools' Federation and the executive headteacher was appointed in September 2018.

### The school's Christian vision

To learn every day, to help each other and to be happy  
Underpinned by the words about Christian love from 1 Corinthians 13  
All are inspired to achieve their aspirations through the values of love, hope, forgiveness, compassion, wisdom, thankfulness, trust and friendship.

### Key findings

- The executive headteacher and leadership team have created a vibrant Christian learning community which enables every member to flourish. However although the vision is based on the central value of Christian love this has not been clearly defined in a way that can drive the school forward.
- Staff have a well- developed shared understanding of spirituality based on the vision which successfully promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning and creativity. The curriculum provides progressively deeper opportunities to develop curiosity through questioning and responding.
- Pupils' understanding of issues of injustice and inequality are being enhanced by their links to a child in Cambodia.
- The recent reorganisation of the way religious education (RE) and collective worship is led has further raised their profile. Although pupils' views and ideas are highly valued they do not take leadership roles in worship within school on a regular basis.

### Areas for development

- Underpin the school's vision in concise biblical teaching to ensure that it is clearly articulated thereby strengthening its impact.
- Actively involve pupils in the planning and leadership of worship on a regular basis so that they take a greater role in its development.
- Seek cross curricular opportunities to improve pupils' experience and understanding of difference and cultural diversity.

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**

The vision for St George's Infants, as part of the Northam Schools' Federation, is having a good impact on the whole school community. It is strongly driven by the executive headteacher and his leadership team including governors and clergy. The vision is underpinned by the biblical teaching of Christian love by St Paul. However, since a specific set of words has not been clearly articulated, the impact of the vision is underdeveloped. Leaders' self-evaluation of the school, including the role undertaken by the ethos committee is effective. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed in ways that have enabled the school to make good progress. As a result, the impact of collective worship including spiritual development on the school community has been increased. The recent reorganisation of the leadership of religious education (RE) and collective worship has led to improvements. The productive partnership with the federated junior school has been mutually beneficial and creates a strong sense of unity. Through working with their partner school, the diocese and beyond, staff are given opportunities to develop professionally. In this way, the school is continuously striving to improve.

The school's child-centred curriculum inspires pupils because they know themes will be exciting and that their ideas valued and actioned. Varied, enriching activities including trips, 'family' meetings, beach visits and forest school are provided across the curriculum. They have a good impact on creating positive attitudes to learning. Exciting projects undertaken at home complement learning in school very effectively. They demonstrate the school's strong partnership with parents. These activities are very effective in engaging each child's interests, and imagination thereby enabling all to flourish. Changes are made to the curriculum to meet the needs of every pupil. As a result, attainment and progress for all pupils, including the disadvantaged, are at least in line or above with national averages.

The aspiration of the vision ensures that school is a secure and enjoyable place where all are happy in their learning. Pupils are motivated by the way individual achievement is valued in the 'Golden Book' and set in a Christian context. They are inspired to be the 'best they can be'. St George's lives out its vision by demonstrating that it is a loving and caring Christian community. Pupils are particularly sensitive of the needs of their peers. They recognise others who are 'struggling' and show support in a variety of ways. The vision empowers them to help others in need in the community such as through Harbour, the local homeless charity. The core values, including forgiveness, and friendship are lived out in daily life. As a result, relationships between pupils and at all levels are excellent. Pupils and staff feel valued because their well-being matters to school leaders. Staff are a strong team who work in a highly collaborative way. Pupils show a high level of respect for their peers. Activities to promote diversity and difference across the curriculum are effective in developing pupils' open, accepting attitudes. However opportunities to explore issues of diversity at a local and global level are less well developed.

A philosophical, questioning approach which promotes spiritual development is embedded in the curriculum. This enables pupils to explore and respond to global and ethical issues, including through the use of big questions, in an exceptionally secure setting. As a result, pupils are able to develop and justify their viewpoints and disagree politely. They are passionate in their adoption and pursuit of causes which challenge injustice and inequality. Pupils are learning about injustice and inequality through the case study of a child in Cambodia. They are learning about her life and comparing it to their own through a development aid charity. Pupils have expressed their concern for the devastation caused by the recent Australian bush fires and the need to take action.

Collective worship is inclusive, inspirational and central to daily life. It reflects the school's vision and values by rooting them in biblical teaching. In particular, it underpins love as the central value of the school's vision. Pupils clearly understand Jesus as the light of the world and that they can shine a light by helping others in difficult times. Times of prayer and reflection often promoted by the class's 'special board' promote spiritual development during the day very effectively. Pupils are developing a good understanding of Anglican tradition such as the Christian festivals. These are often celebrated with the federated junior school enhancing the strong sense of community. Last summer's Ascension Day's service in the grounds of that school, had a powerful spiritual impact on all present. Whilst a range of liturgical responses are used very well, a reference to the Trinity has not been introduced. Pupils sing enthusiastically, take part in drama and share ideas with their

peers ensuring that worship is interactive. The vicar's substantial role includes regularly working with the pupils' ethos committee. However, whilst pupils' roles are important, they are mainly supportive. Opportunities for them to plan and lead themselves are limited.

Following a recent review, changes have been made to the way RE is led. This is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning and attitudes. Leadership is shared and professional development is up to date. This enables the RE leader and the team to increase their own expertise for the benefit of all pupils and staff within the federation and the local area. Recent reorganisation of the delivery of the curriculum means that pupils enjoy RE due to the imaginative and interesting way that it is taught. They especially enjoy and benefit from discussions which challenge their thinking. They are able to think deeply, question ideas and making connections which develop their understanding. The youngest pupils can identify the links between God's light in the Christian creation story and the recently celebrated Candlemas. Consequently, RE makes a substantial contribution to pupils' spiritual growth. Visitors, including from local ecumenical clergy support pupils in their understanding of Christianity as a diverse and living faith. Pupils demonstrate a curiosity and appreciation for the beliefs of religious communities studied. They enjoy exploring the Jewish festival of Sukkot because it is taught in a highly interactive and innovative way. The curriculum is planned very well, using an effective balance in line with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.



**The effectiveness of RE is Good**

Standards in RE are good. Teaching and learning is consistently graded good. All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils make good progress against the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is because assessment procedures are robust enabling all pupils to flourish academically in RE.

Executive Headteacher	Jim Williams
Inspector's name and number	Daphne Spitzer No 37