

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

## By Brook Valley Church of England Primary School

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| Address            | The Street, Yatton Keynell, Chippenham SN14 7BA |                  |                                     |
| Date of inspection | 11 February 2020                                | Status of school | Stand-alone academy inspected as VC |
| Diocese            | Bristol   | URN              | 138112                              |

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| <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>Excellent</b> |
| <b>Additional Judgement</b> | <b>The impact of collective worship</b>  | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Excellent</b> |

### School context

By Brook Valley School is a primary school with 193 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 below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. The school is a national support school and the headteacher is a well-established national leader of education.

### The school's Christian vision

'Roots to grow, wings to fly' is drawn from the teaching of Isaiah (40:31)  
'They will soar on wings like eagles'.

Our vision is our being and our ambition, helping children to grow, show and share all they are and all they can become as children of God.

### Key findings

- The impact of the vision on the whole school is exceptional. Its imaginative presentation of progression from roots to wings results in both certainty and aspiration for pupils and staff alike. The whole community benefits from pupils and adults living out the vision each and every day.
- Dedicated school leaders are very wise and absolutely attentive to the worth and needs of each individual in the school. They are resolute about always seeking to improve as a Church school.
- Bold, ethical decisions about admissions and mental health, for example, ensure that the school practises inclusion and deep care for pupils, adults and families.
- Inspirational collective worship is the pulse of the school. Church partnerships are extremely strong and reciprocal. Pupil worship ministers are very skilled leaders of worship and encourage imaginative prayer. The peace and prayer garden is not fully utilised.
- Religious Education (RE) is taught creatively and pupil responses show real maturity of thought and a significant depth of spirituality. RE and collective worship prompt pupils into heartfelt and meaningful action.

### Areas for development

- Develop the peace and prayer garden so that it provides more interactive prayer and reflection opportunities for pupils, staff and the wider community.
- Review school policies in line with the scheduled timetable so that the vision's impact on the policy is made more explicit.

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**

By Brook Valley's profound vision permeates and energises the entire school community. Leaders have excellent appreciation of the theological principles underpinning the vision. 'Roots to grow' is understood meaningfully as the love and nurture of God, 'wings to fly' is seen as fullness of life as a child of God. Leaders, including governors, model the meaning of the vision in their daily conduct and in their strategic thinking. The vision ensures that this is a school community which lives out the intrinsic worth of every individual. No pupil is ever turned away as staff passionately believe all pupils can develop firmer roots and be enabled to find their wings (talents).

The headteacher embodies the vision both at By Brook Valley and in her support work for other schools, which include church schools. Senior leaders, including governors believe it is their responsibility and privilege to resource this work. They also forensically examine all aspects of school life to ensure there are well formed roots and sufficient opportunities for wings. This has led to bold decisions, such as providing an additional teacher to raise standards in a particular class. They have also invested in independent counselling support for all staff and stilling and relaxation sessions for pupils.

The equality of pupils and adults is a tangible result of the vision. Pupils insist that 'everyone looks out for everyone else' and staff and parents talk movingly about the 'one large family' of the school. Classrooms are awash with relevant imagery of trees and flowers. Academic progress is spoken about naturally and effectively by staff and all pupils through the language of roots and wings. Knowledge organisers are effectually developed by classroom teachers for all subjects, including RE, as part of the roots. Wings imagery is excellently helping pupils to apply their understanding in new situations, often linked to their lives in the future. Pupils have an extensive understanding of the different elements of spirituality through the innovative imagery of a spiritual flower. Pupils and staff value this as a highly effective way to discuss spiritual issues openly and maturely. They learn from each other, both in the planned curriculum but also spontaneously. A Year 6 pupil commented that spirituality involves 'treasuring the things that mean the most for you, like family, friends and faith.'

Most movingly, pupils passionately desire 'roots and wings' for the disadvantaged in the local area and overseas. The partnership with children in Uganda is inspiring them to become advocates for global justice, through practical help and through publicising the issues to the wider community. Pupils are also deepening their awareness of Christians elsewhere in the world. Pupils are inspired to action by the centrality of prayer, the Bible and thankfulness to God of Christians in Uganda.

Partnerships are exceptionally strong. The local churches and the school play hugely important, enriching roles in each others' lives. The school is an extension of the church community and hosts many church events. The churches more than willingly provide governors, hold services and are involved in joint projects. A church experience day led to the making of a school altar cloth. A pupil then replicated the meaning of this at home and involved her whole family reverently. A film celebrating the dynamic partnership between school and church has been made recently by the diocese of Bristol to inspire others. School leaders trial and network many of the initiatives of the diocese, most recently on new approaches to relationships education. School leaders cherish the expertise of the diocese and ensure that, annually at least, a full day of training on significant issues is given. Consequently, staff confidently articulate their awareness of church school issues and are well resourced for future leadership.

Pupils are remarkably confident when discussing and applying Bible stories. The four key school values, hope, friendship, forgiveness and honesty are the 'roots to grow' in their character development. Pupils are trusted to research and debate suitable Bible stories for each value. They produced four large crosses with very effective pupil-created collages of these stories. These show the centrality of the Christian story, the Bible and the values to pupils. The impact of the vision goes beyond the school boundary. The innovative values postcards help the whole community to celebrate values-related achievements outside of school. House pupil parliaments, with their Y6 leaders, have devised a citizenship award that again enables whole families to respond to the vision of the school. A parent was so moved by her child's written prayer that she had to share it at a business conference.

Pupils are inspired by the vision to live together exceptionally harmoniously and are keen to see themselves and others thrive. The values are the tools by which they and the adults make this a daily reality. Restorative justice is used confidently and effectively in the rare cases of things going wrong. Pupils consider that part of their 'wings to fly' is an overriding determination to combat injustice. Pupils take initiative. They, for example, take goods to a local foodbank, as a deliberate counterbalance to 'Black Friday', and then stay and help. Pupils are also persuading the local community to make eco-bricks for the reuse and recycle garden.

Pupils are nurtured to respond to the vision by highly stimulating collective worship experiences. Open The Book and a church storyteller help bring the Bible alive. Pupils and adults overwhelmingly assert that collective worship strengthens them and contributes to extremely positive mental health. Pupils and adults treasure the variety in the worship which enables them to respond to what is important each day. Pupils see personal prayer and reflection as central to their development. Skilled pupil worship ministers plan, lead and evaluate collective worship. They devise interactive prayer stations, often using images not words, that deeply inspire pupils and adults. The peace and prayer garden does not contain resources to match the vibrancy of the inside of the school. There are opportunities for it to become a more valued area for pupils, staff and the wider community.

RE is a beacon subject and has a profound impact on pupils and adults. RE provides a safe space in which pupils tackle searching questions that promote deeper thinking. This is evident in pupil responses to Christianity and to other major world faiths. Pupils of all ages use theological and biblical concepts with dexterity and readily apply them to their own experiences. Debating whether 'treat others as you treat yourself' is appropriate for all human beings led to independent research about equivalent teachings in world faiths. Accurate monitoring systems very successfully ensure that all pupils, including those that are vulnerable and those with special educational needs, flourish in RE.

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| Headteacher                 | Beverley Ball     |
| Inspector's name and number | Simon Stevens 953 |