

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

### Wimborne St John's First School

<b>Address</b>	St John's Hill, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 1BX		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	13 June 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	VC First, Wimborne Academy Trust
<b>Diocese</b>	Salisbury	<b>URN</b>	141821

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

#### School context

St John's is a first school with 150 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. In March 2015 the school became part of the Wimborne multi-academy trust (WAT). Since the last denominational inspection, there have been changes in the senior leadership team, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

#### The school's Christian vision

*'Let us love one another, for love comes from God.'* (1 John 4: 7)

#### Key findings

- St John's is a beacon Church school and a pioneer within this field. The dedicated, robust leadership enables a transformative and empowered Christian community in which all flourish.
- The exemplary supportive culture of care and wellbeing for all pupils and adults stems from the inclusive love and respect for everyone in this nurturing Christian family.
- The seamless inter-connected partnership with the Church is integral to the life and work of the school, enabling one entity between the two. Prayer and reflection are deeply embedded and are natural and essential parts of everyone's spiritual journeys.
- These young pupils eloquently articulate what the school's vision and values mean to them, with many able to root this in the Bible.
- Innovative practice in gathering evidence in collective worship and religious education (RE) is being shared more widely within the trust and in the wider diocese.

#### Areas for development

- Deepen the articulation of key Bible verses underpinning the school's vision and values so that everyone can tell the story of their school's journey.
- Enable pupils to encounter people of diverse faiths and beliefs more frequently to nurture their spiritual and cultural development.

## **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**

Undoubtedly, St John's is a family where absolute joy shines forth from every single member of this inclusive and nurturing Christian community which 'envelops you'. Belonging is important for parents whilst staff find this a 'loving atmosphere' and 'a wonderful place to work' amongst a 'supportive team'. St John's is a beacon Church school in the eyes of the diocese and a pioneer within the trust. This is because it leads the way in what a distinctively Christian school can be. There is an exceptional connectivity and incredible sense of 'one entity' between the adjacent St John's Church and the school. Everyone is extremely passionate about being 'one'. The dedicated, robust leadership, spearheaded by the headteacher, enables a transformative and empowered Christian community in which all flourish. They are driven by their school vision of the firm foundation to 'Let us love one another, for love comes from God'. Academy committee members (ACMs) clearly know the future direction of their school, with any bold decisions shaped by their vision and with robust monitoring in place. All are welcome and those who join from community schools within the trust, such as the deputy headteacher, have become excellent role models. This is a huge strength of the headteacher's leadership, empowering staff to be highly reflective in taking their next steps. Many staff go on to become leaders of other Church schools. Even its young pupils eloquently articulate what the school's vision and values mean to them, with many able to root this in the Bible. They speak enthusiastically about the pictorial representation of their Christian vision. This depicts Noah's Ark, with 'God our Father who holds us in his hands' with the rainbow of hope above. They effuse about how the ark represents the body of the school, with its ladder symbolising how people can join and move on, which is all part of family life. The school banners reflect both the Trinity and the school's values and are a strong reminder to all. They proudly display God the Father showing love, God the Son modelling forgiveness and God the Holy Spirit demonstrating friendship. Pupils and adults, including parents, know where their well embedded vision can be found in biblical teaching. Deepening the articulation of key Bible verses underpinning the school's vision and values is ongoing so all can tell the story of their school's journey.

At St John's the focus is very much on the quality of the teacher knowing every child and meeting their needs. Staff are relentless in supporting all pupils and especially those who are most vulnerable, enabling them to flourish in all areas of the curriculum. They listen to pupil voice, identifying and significantly removing any barriers to learning. Moreover, skilled and specialist staff make a real difference to pupils with complex needs through the vital dragonflies nurture room. One pupil said, 'The school vision helps me to show courage to others and love everyone else, not just myself.' This is because staff model love for the pupils, giving second chances within a spirit of forgiveness and a place of safety and trust. This greatly helps the successful transition of some pupils to middle school. St John's pupils achieve results which are above Dorset and national averages.

The shared understanding of spiritual development at St John's centres on 'our connectivity with others and the world beyond'. This includes the pupils who are active agents of change, exploring and challenging injustice and inequality. They are passionate in taking a lead in local and global issues, inspired by their vision and what it means to be part of the body of Christ. As an eco-school on their third green flag, they are concerned to 'look after the world for God and give respect to the world'. This involves going to the school's leaders and wanting to 'do something' more to help war on waste and plastic pollution. They support the local foodbank around Harvest-tide. In addition, there is a strong global partnership with Selah Church School in Romania, sharing 'favourite Bible stories and worship songs'.

In this nurturing Christian family, there is an exemplary supportive culture of care and wellbeing. This stems from inclusive love and respect. Pupils have a voice through the school council, worship team or as sports ambassadors and regularly speak to the ACMs. Staff have adopted the 'Heartsmart' approach which meets personal, social, mental health and emotional needs of parents as well as pupils. Parents say pupils help remind them to make the right 'Heartsmart' choices, such as 'Don't rub it in, rub it out.' The developing use of the spirituality boxes and the wooden figures of 'little people' are making a great difference. For example, one Year 4 pupil comments, 'I am putting my person in front of the mirror. I sometimes make bad choices and need to think about making the right choices.' As a rights respecting school, there is a common language which celebrates difference and diversity well as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils speak of how someone who is 'still learning might change'.

Blessed by being on the same site, the seamless partnership with the Church is integral to the life and work of the school. St John's enjoys a variety of worship leaders including from the local churches and children's worker. Members of the pupil worship team are active in helping everyone learn of the breadth of God's love, 'how powerful he is' and to have courage. Prayer and reflection are deeply embedded parts of everyone's spiritual journeys where 'God is on your heart the whole time'. Pupils comment, 'When we pray, God can help us get through anything and nothing is impossible for him.' Stemming from the school's vision, pupils cite, 'God sent us a message to love our neighbours and share God's love with everyone.' There is a strong emphasis on Bible stories in worship and in the Godly Play classroom. Inspiring and inclusive worship has an emphasis on how 'Jesus came down like God in human form' with 'Experience Easter' helping pupils explore Holy Communion.

Pupils enjoy 'learning about Islam so we can respect every religion'. Enabling pupils to meet people of diverse faiths more frequently is limited. RE helps pupils and adults to reflect deeply in a safe space so all can flourish and grow spiritually. Innovative practice in gathering evidence in floor books is being shared widely within the trust and in the diocese. Floor books show how 'we build each other up'. As one member of staff notes, they are 'truly blessed to be a part of St John's' where personal faith can be strengthened.

Headteacher	Katharine Anstey
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244