

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

<b>Stalbridge Church of England Primary School</b>			
Address	Duck Lane, Stalbridge, Dorset, DT10 2LP		
Date of inspection	22 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Salisbury	URN	113899

<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

Stalbridge is a primary school with 183 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. No 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's vicar, who was also a governor, has recently retired. A member of the church is currently supporting the school.

### The school's Christian vision

We believe in building each other up, in discovering the potential of our world and in ourselves; we aspire to be the best we can be through God.

This vision is rooted in Romans 12:2-3 and 6-8. These verses encourage us all to be transformed by God's love, to think differently and to help each other.

### Key findings

- The headteacher, staff and governors fulfil the school's Christian vision by placing love and care at the centre of all decisions. This makes Stalbridge a fully inclusive community where everybody is valued.
- The skilled and determined leadership of the headteacher is strongly supported by staff and governors, resulting in an established Christian school where pupils flourish and thrive.
- Inspirational acts of worship successfully encourage pupils to reflect on a wide range of themes, allowing them to apply the learning to their own daily lives.
- An extremely close relationship exists between the school and church and this has been particularly valuable since the recent retirement of the vicar. Church members' commitment has been demonstrated by their significantly increased support, ensuring the church's presence remains strong during this interregnum period.

### Areas for development

- Ensure that the theological underpinning of the vision and its strong link to the Christian values continues to be shared with, and understood by, the school community. In this way its impact and influence will remain strong as new pupils, parents and staff join the school.
- Develop further opportunities for pupils to explore global awareness, including the role of Christianity worldwide. This will support an increased understanding and appreciation of diverse communities.

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**

Stalbridge's Christian vision, underpinned by deeply embedded values, is rooted in Christian narrative and thoroughly understood by its community. This is a nurturing, inclusive school where mutual respect and love permeate all aspects of daily life. The headteacher, supported by governors and staff, has a deep commitment to the school's Christian ethos. The vision influences leaders' decision-making, keeping the well-being of Stalbridge's pupils central to all that happens.

The methodology for ensuring that the vision's meaning, value and impact is communicated to new pupils, parents and staff joining the school is yet to be decided upon.

Positive pupil behaviour is celebrated, reinforcing pupils' understanding of its importance. Aspiration is supported by an annual 'careers fair' where visiting adults describe their jobs, helping pupils not to be fearful of challenge when working towards goals.

Established monitoring systems measure Stalbridge's Christian distinctiveness. These include feedback from pupils, staff and parents which informs leaders when prioritising future actions. Governors are extremely committed, maintaining a strong presence within the school. This active involvement gives them numerous opportunities to see the impact of the school's provision on pupil behaviour and learning. The school is ambitious for church school excellence and this is evidenced in its engagement with the diocese, ensuring the school benefits from high quality professional development and advice.

Leaders prioritise all aspects of pupils' social, emotional and academic development. There is a broad, balanced curriculum which is engaging and exciting. The school has been awarded national accreditation, such as the Gold School Games award and Silver Eco School status. Pupils receive individualised provision when appropriate, ensuring they have their very best chances for educational success. The school has created a supportive 'family' with all staff agreeing each day which pupils need to be especially supported emotionally or pastorally. Academic attainment and progress are at least in line with, and often above, the nationally expected standards.

High quality religious education (RE) teaching, combined with engaging resources, gives pupils a growing knowledge of world faiths, including their similarities and differences to Christianity. Fundraising has extended pupils' global awareness, however, they have a limited understanding of Christianity as a world faith. Leaders are aware that deepening pupils' experiences are important within their rural school.

Pupils know each faith is sacred to its believers and therefore should be respected. Planning for RE and collective worship includes strong links to the Christian vision and values. Teachers guide class discussions with skilled questioning, encouraging a range of personal opinions. This includes a discussion on current Christmas television adverts for large companies and how they compare to the Church of England's advert for Christmas. Pupils are aware that they will not always agree with each other, however, they do agree that all opinions, even contrasting ones, should be respected. Rigorous monitoring by the RE leader enables evaluative judgements to be made regarding learning standards, including the identification of areas that may need further action.

The established Christian values of 'believe, discover and aspire' are understood by pupils and they can clearly explain how they apply to their own lives. A set of 'Be Kind' rules have been devised by the school council and these are made explicit to the whole pupil community as a support for expected behaviour. These include, 'We believe in fairness and equality.' A special 'spotted' display board praises pupils and adults who have lived out the 'fruits of the spirit' acting as role models for others. One child stated, 'If you are stuck on which side to take, God will direct you to a good choice.'

Pupils are made aware of places in the world where life is not so advantaged as their own. An example is the school's established partnership with a school in Islamabad. The pupils in Islamabad shared their feelings on the issue of gender inequality in their country which led to Stalbridge's pupils discussing whether this was fair. The two schools discovered they had a common concern regarding pollution and sustainability. This powerful

partnership has led to both sets of pupils encouraging each other with ideas for fighting pollution in their own countries.

The pupils show their awareness of social responsibility with their involvement in a number of national and local charities. Members of the community were delighted to receive an Easter egg from pupils as part of the 'share-the-miracle' project. Each week the youngest pupils spend time with residents in the local senior citizens home. These pupils look forward to their visits, participating in shared craft, music and reading activities. The homes' carers describe residents as 'coming alive' during these innovative inter-generational visits which develop mutual respect between age groups.

The parish church is currently in an interregnum period due to the very well loved and respected vicar retiring. Since his leaving strong partnerships have ensured the church's significant presence has remained. The lay minister regularly leads school worship and is a welcome visitor in school. The school is able to use the church at any time for worship or curriculum activities. Pupils enjoy visiting the church, saying it is a peaceful place where they feel close to God.

Collective worship is a special time for the whole school community. Pupils have an age appropriate understanding of the Holy Trinity with three worship candles supporting this understanding. Prayer and reflection take place within worship and throughout the school day. Each classroom's reflection space has been personalised by pupils giving them ownership of its design and use. Pupils re-tell Bible stories, understanding how lessons within them can guide everyday behaviour. Class worship enables worship themes to be explored in a more intimate setting, providing pupils with opportunities to engage in thoughtful discussion with their peers. Pupils are involved in planning and leading worship which allows them to understand its purpose within their school. Regular 'Open the Book' worships, led by church members, are particularly enjoyed.

Parents appreciate the nurturing atmosphere within Stalbridge describing staff, including the headteacher, as very approachable. Prompt action is taken when dealing with concerns, however small. New parents particularly notice the high level of care given and the positive effect this has on their children. Complex situations are supported with sensitivity, compassion and love in this deeply Christian school.

Headteacher	Sarah Lafferty-Jenkins
Inspector's name and number	Lorraine Pugh 819