

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Balcombe Church of England Primary School	
Address	London Road, Haywards Heath, RH17 6HS
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Good

School's vision
<p style="text-align: center;">IN ALL WE DO WE ARE GUIDED BY GOD</p> <p>Our vision at Balcombe C of E Primary School is to be guided by God to provide our pupils with a solid foundation for life; enabling them to flourish into confident learners, caring friends and responsible members of their community.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's vision, and its Christian underpinning of God in the context of Jesus and His teaching, is clearly known and articulated by the school leadership and embraced by the school community. • The vision and its associated values are deeply embedded in all aspects of school life, reflected in the strong child centred provision, and firmly drive school developments. • The school has a deeply caring and nurturing ethos reflected in the positive behaviour and relationships, and social action linked to local and global partnerships. However, currently there is not enough opportunity for pupils to engage in social action in other contexts. • Collective worship has a high focus in school life, securely expressing the vision using a rich variety of formats. Opportunities for pupils to plan, deliver and evaluate collective worship have not yet sufficiently returned to pre-covid levels. • Religious education (RE) is effective in expressing the vision and uses its rich rural location to provide good spiritual development opportunities. However, these opportunities do not fully align with the school's vision because there is not yet a shared understanding of spiritual development.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a whole school shared understanding of spirituality to ensure the existing good spiritual development opportunities are more closely aligned with the school's vision. • Further develop pupil engagement in social action to provide more opportunities for pupils to demonstrate courageous advocacy. • Provide a wider range of opportunities for pupils to plan, deliver and evaluate collective worship in order to re-establish previous good practice.

Inspection findings

The school's well-established vision to be 'guided by God' underpins all aspects of this good church school. The vision accurately reflects the context of the school's Christian foundation and views of the school's community. The vision's Christian underpinning of God in the context of Jesus is clearly known and articulated by the school leadership and embraced by the school community. The school has a strong relationship with the local church and community. Their close working partnership strongly supports the school effectiveness as a church school. School leadership is good. Well informed governors, working closely with subject leaders and the local church, provide robust support and challenge. Monitoring and evaluation by leaders at all levels is secure and effective. It accurately informs school developments and spending decisions that firmly align with the vision. The vision is fulfilled through the adoption of six Christian values firmly linked to biblical teaching and deeply embedded throughout the life of the school. They are well known and modelled by pupils and staff.

The vision is strongly promoted through the school values of care and respect. These deeply embedded values contribute significantly to positive behaviour and relationships, making this a happy school with a deeply caring, nurturing environment. Pupils demonstrate high levels of good behaviour and understand forgiveness and reconciliation. Staff relationships are strong, caring, and supportive. Good opportunities are provided for them to give feedback and opinions to inform school development. Consequently, staff feel valued and respected which is reflected in low staff turnover. Parents and staff speak highly of the school's caring nurturing ethos and talk passionately of the tangible ways the school has supported them and the wider community locally and globally.

Highly effective provision and initiatives promote good mental health and welfare. This is a strength of the school encouraging resilience and hope. Examples of this include a special outdoor room with quiet activities for pupils who find breaktime challenging, and changes to staff workload to improve their work/life balance. The vision for confident learners actively shapes curriculum provision that promotes perseverance and the school values. This is reflected in the high-quality child-centred curriculum provision for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). For example, rich opportunities exist for outdoor learning for all pupils, and individualised quality specialist support for SEND pupils. The impact is pupils with high attendance who make good progress appropriate to their needs and abilities.

Pupil voice is strong. Opportunities such as School Council enable pupils to participate effectively in school decision making. Pupils are confident in discussions and demonstrate clear dignity and respect for each other when voicing their opinions and aspirations. Pupils frequently initiate and lead decisions relating to the school's high level of fundraising to support local and global communities. Strong, mutually beneficial partnerships locally and globally impact positively in fulfilling the vision. Interschool partnerships promote good opportunities to support pupils and staff with wider curriculum activities and training. A well-established partnership with an orphanage in Uganda provides good opportunity for pupils to learn about global diversity and engage in social action to support sustainability projects. Social action enabling pupils to be courageous advocates in other contexts is currently under developed.

Collective worship has a high focus in school life. It securely promotes the vision strongly supported by the local church. Worship follows the Christian calendar and takes place in school and church. It is led by staff, church members and visitors giving good opportunities for pupils to experience a diversity of different styles of Christian worship and personal

viewpoints. Worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring. Staff and pupils attend and participate as appropriate for their personal belief. Worship imaginatively promotes the vision and values through Bible stories and the teachings of Jesus using a rich variety of formats. For example, the Open the Book church group explored the values through lively drama that retold how Noah was guided by God. Planning, monitoring and evaluation by the school leadership, governors and church members is effective with evaluation securely informing developments. Pupil involvement and ownership in planning and leading worship is currently limited having been paused during the covid pandemic. Its re-establishment has not yet been fully achieved.

Prayer and reflection form an integral part of worship and the life of the school. Attractive interactive classroom prayer areas and outdoor reflection areas enhance prayer opportunities. Pupils understand the significance of prayer and describe how these opportunities enable them to thank God or seek God's help. Spiritual development opportunities are good with diverse spiritual experiences integrated into the curriculum. The school's rich rural location and varied school grounds are used effectively. For example, in RE pupils search the grounds for signs of spring's new life, and pupils regularly experience a bespoke outdoor curriculum in nearby woodland. Well-chosen trips enhance these opportunities such as experiencing the awe and wonder of God's universe on a planetarium visit. However, these opportunities do not yet fully align with the school's vision because there is not yet a policy or shared understanding and approach to spiritual development.

Religious education (RE) securely promotes the vision and reflects the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement. RE provision is good using Diocese approved teaching materials effectively. They help to make the vision very real providing a solid RE foundation for life and enabling pupils to be confident RE learners. Consequently, pupils develop a good, age-appropriate understanding of Christianity and the Trinity, and the diversity of world religions and views. Regular assessment and recording are effective in enabling teachers to know how and what pupils are learning. The living of the values in RE, such as respect, provides safe opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and confidently discuss big questions. Regular monitoring and evaluation by the RE leader and governors are rigorous. This accurately informs the development of RE teaching and staff training. Supported by the local primary schools' network and diocese, training in the teaching of RE is good with staff and governors being well informed about current thinking and initiatives.

Information			
School	Balcombe Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	28 February 2023
URN	126006	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Chichester	Pupils on roll	135
Headteacher	Wendy Millbanks		
Chair of Governors	Ian Tremble		
Inspector	Richard Dyer	No.	513