

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Downton Church of England VA Primary School	
Address	Gravel Close, Downton, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP5 3LZ
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
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Good

School's vision
<p>Our vision and associated Values are grounded in Mark 4: 30-32. Love, Peace and Joy are our core values and powered by our ethos Dream, Believe and Achieve. Jesus told us that faith as small as a mustard seed could achieve great things. Our community is outward facing, setting learning in global contexts; we recognise that each of us is unique, and, like the mustard seed, we all have the potential to grow and flourish in God's world. "I am with you... I will strengthen you and help you." Isaiah 41:10</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders are passionate and enthusiastic about enabling pupils to flourish. A dedicated staff team live out the vision. However, monitoring by governors is less focused. They do not evaluate the impact that the vision has on all aspects of a church school. • The distinctive Christian vision is embedded in the life of the school with pupils confidently explaining the difference it makes. There is an influential culture of high aspirations and expectations which changes pupils' attitudes towards learning. • The leader for religious education (RE) and collective worship brings expertise and new initiatives ensuring both have a high profile. This leads to elements of excellent practice in RE. Planning for collective worship does not clearly show how themes are to be progressively developed as pupils move through the school, which would enable them to deepen their understanding. • Pupils have a real sense of being part of a caring family. They treat one another with a high degree of respect and dignity. Mental health has a high priority with very effective systems which nurtures well-being for all, including adults. • Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to develop leadership skills and play a major role in daily life. They confidently and independently become agents for change. Whilst there are some opportunities for pupils to flourish spiritually, these are not identified in planning nor can pupils express their ideas in creative ways.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that governors consistently identify key areas for improvement by creating a robust approach to monitoring through evaluating the impact which the Christian vision has on all aspects of a church school. • Identify in planning where there are opportunities which enable pupils to develop spiritually, so they can express their ideas in a variety of creative ways. • Enhance the depth of planning in collective worship so it is clear how the Christian values and themes for worship will be progressively developed as pupils move through the school.



Inspection findings

The distinctive Christian vision is fundamental in shaping this caring community where all feel part of a family. Pupils and staff have real ownership of the vision and articulate the difference it makes. The vision effectively addresses the needs of the community by raising pupils' aspirations and extending their awareness of the wider world. Leaders have a growing understanding of the theological principles underpinning the vision. They talk about the God given potential of each individual. Leaders recognise their role in enabling pupils to flourish and make a difference for others. Leaders constantly use the vision to drive improvements, so that Downton is a good school with elements of excellent practice in several areas. Examples of excellence are evident in leadership, the culture of high aspirations and support for mental health and well-being. Leaders create a strong dedicated team who live out the vision. Staff feel valued, pointing to examples where they have been enabled to 'shine'. School leaders are astute, making ongoing evaluations, leading to refinements which effectively meet pupils' needs. At present governors' monitoring is less robust. There is no system which allows them to determine the impact which the vision has on all aspects of being a church school. Opportunities for governors to talk with pupils are limited.

The vision nurtures an influential culture of aspiring to be the best you can be. Pupils develop excellent attitudes to learning, taking a real pride in their work. They consistently attribute this to the 'dream' and 'believe' element of the vision. Pupils use strategies which help when they are challenged by new learning, whilst staff effectively raise self-esteem. Weekly award celebrations are highly treasured, emphasising pupils' achievements both in and outside of the classroom. Vulnerable pupils are well supported. Specific gaps in learning are identified with focused interventions led by skilled staff. Leaders are inspired by the vision to create a new curriculum. It is carefully planned so experiences and skills are progressively developed. Theme days engage and stimulate pupils' vibrant love of learning. Pupils show a highly developed understanding of the importance of caring for God's world. They discuss climate change and exploitation of the natural world in depth as part of rigorous debates. This drives pupils to become independent advocates for change. Pupils raise awareness of issues of which they feel strongly, for example, challenging local companies' use of plastics. This led to a pupils' eco group being formed. They liaise with the kitchen to reduce waste and challenge classes to do the same. There is an agreed understanding of spirituality. However, opportunities to enhance pupils' flourishing spiritually are not identified in planning. Pupils express their reflections in writing but not in other creative ways.


The vision promotes partnerships as a means of drawing on and sharing best practice to enable pupils to achieve their potential. Leaders have worked alongside another school through a challenging period, providing systems which supports pupils shows how leaders live out the vision beyond the school. Subject leaders' expertise is enhanced by working alongside other schools in the cluster. Relationships with local churches are impressive. Support for governance, leading inspiring worship, workshops and pastoral care stand out. The diocese supports through focused visits and specific training, leading to the introduction of 'Understanding Christianity' an RE resource. This is raising pupils' and staff understanding of Christianity. Mental health and well-being have a high profile. Pupils use of a range of strategies to help them keep calm. These are extended termly through designated days which reinforces their importance. Detailed programs led by the coordinator involves parents and school working closely together providing high quality nurture. Class pupil ambassadors effectively support peers to use well-being strategies which are invaluable.

Pupils recognise how the vision shapes their attitudes and relationships. They point to Christian values which help them to understand what the vision looks like in daily life. Pupils'

behaviour is at least good, they work collaboratively together and recognise the importance of forgiveness. They treat one another with a high degree of respect and dignity. Pupils' leadership skills are strengthened through being part of the various groups, such as school council. Pupils confidently challenge the parish council on matters about caring for God's world.

The RE subject leader brings knowledge and enthusiasm to this area, ensuring it has a high profile. This is evident in the of number high quality improvements. New planning pages for each unit strengthens pupils' understanding of religious vocabulary. Pupils know how to be successful by using success criteria which offers clear guidance. The level of pupils' knowledge is evident in the depth of discussions about questions of meaning and purpose. Pupils confidently share ideas, identifying points from both sides of an argument. They learn from one another and how to disagree well. Planning is more detailed. Individualised feedback inspires pupils to think at a deeper level. Interactive theme days are valued, where pupils enrich their understanding of key concepts such as the Christian belief of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. World faith days deepen pupils' appreciation of world faiths and views. Assessment systems are secure and help to identify where pupils require further support.

Pupils draw upon Christian values developed in collective worship to help them understand the meaning of the vision. Whilst planning is in place it is not clear how pupils will progressively deepen their understanding of the themes as the move through the school. The coordinator continues to introduce improvements, such as creating a pupils' worship council. Pupils are enthusiastic to plan and lead worship, developing the relevant skills. They evaluate the worship they lead so they can improve upon it next time, as well as making suggestions for further developments. This led to a wider variety of worship leaders being welcomed. New class worship allows pupils to take greater responsibility for planning and shaping worship which they relish. Collective worship is invitational, inclusive and often inspiring. Pupils have a depth of understanding of some Christian festivals such as Easter. Pupils generally appreciate times to reflect and use prayer and come together as a family. Some find class reflection spaces helpful. The coordinator supports staff training, enhancing the impact of worship.

	The effectiveness of RE is	Good	
	<p>There are distinct pockets of excellent practice in the teaching of RE. Teaching is at least good and frequently better. Pupils enjoy RE, engaged by the rich variety of new approaches. Debates, drama and recording ideas in different ways enables pupils to see the relevance of their studies. The drive of the subject leader has seen pupils' progress rise sharply. More pupils are working at greater depth than expected. Vulnerable pupils are thoughtfully supported, enabling them to flourish.</p>		
Information			
School	Downton Church of England VA Primary School	Inspection date	7 October 2022
URN	126475	VC/VA/ Academy	VA
Diocese/District	Salisbury	Pupils on roll	276
Headteacher	Paula Carlton		
Chair of Governors	Peter Ulliyatt and David Drennan		
Inspector	David Hatrey	No.	844