

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

St John's C of E Academy School	
Address	Bowens Hill Road, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 8DU.

Vision
<p>Belonging Believing Becoming</p> <p>"What shall we say the Kingdom of God is like ?" asked Jesus. "What parable shall we use to explain it? It is like this. A man takes a mustard seed, the smallest seed in the world, and plants it in the ground. After a while it grows up and becomes the biggest of all plants. It puts out such large branches that the birds come and make their nests in its shade." Mark 4: 30-32</p>
Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders have established a clear vision which pupils and adults know. This drives decisions and as a result, the needs of the pupils are met.</li> <li>• As a result of the vision, there is a strong sense of nurturing across the school. This enables the pupils and adults to belong, believe and become.</li> <li>• Collective worship is inclusive, invitational, and inspirational and allows pupils to be excited and enthusiastic about the ways they can develop spiritually.</li> <li>• Staff are supported to develop, making use of the opportunities provided by the trust and as a result feel empowered to make changes.</li> <li>• As result of the Christian vision pupils flourish regardless of any challenges they face. Staff make purposeful adaptations to allow this to happen.</li> </ul>
Development points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pupil's knowledge of chosen faiths and worldviews are not as secure as it could be. The school should ensure that the learning is retained over time.</li> <li>• Opportunities for making change and social action is largely adult led. The school should enhance opportunities for pupils to engage independently.</li> </ul>
Inspection findings
<p>Leaders have taken decisive action to ensure the vision is at the heart of the school and truly rooted in serving its community. They are 'relentlessly bothered' about their community. They ensure no one individual is left out and they strive to be inclusive in all that they endeavour to do. St John's Church of England Academy is in an area of the Forest of Dean where families experience social and economic difficulty, but relationships are strong. The parable of the Mustard Seed and the values within school of Perseverance, Respect, Forgiveness, Truth, and Aspiration are firmly linked to biblical stories. Pupils rightly talk about the stories and how their vision makes them be 'the best they can be.' Pupils understand and know that the teachers want them to grow, academically, socially, and spiritually. As a result, pupils are confident to express their views.</p>

Parents are enthusiastic about the school and see staff as their 'friends' and they feel they can talk to any one of them. The school's nurturing of families has brought about life changes for them. One parent said, "the school knows when I am down, and they take me in and let me cry." The staff at the school have passionately supported and nurtured families through challenging times.

The broad and balanced curriculum shaped by the Christian vision is helping the pupils to experience improved results. Adaptations of the curriculum meet the needs of the pupils. Staff, in some cases, have created bespoke curriculums for pupils and as a result those pupils are flourishing, and their attendance improved significantly. Training received with the diocese has made a significant impact for staff and pupils in delivering Religious Education. Staff have also had opportunity for senior management training and subject leadership training. As a result, staff are equipped to continue to build professionally.

Leaders know their community well and as a result they have developed systems that helps pupils to learn and play together effectively. The school dog, Lua, is a welcomed member of the school community. Pupils look forward to spending time with her during her visits, which supports wellbeing across school. There is a powerful sense of belonging in school and behaviour is good. The staff prioritise their mental health, with the school providing time for professional development and wellbeing. This support leads to a happy and fruitful team.

Collective worship is deeply embedded and valued by all. Pupils are enthusiastic to lead worship, lighting the candles at the start prepares everyone for the start of this valued time. The worship is intricately linked with the values and the vision and pupils are enthused by the Bible stories, making links with daily lives. As pupils enter and leave worship inspiring music is played nurturing a sense of positivity. The school's vision is interlinked with the carefully chosen songs, which build resilience and inspire with their lyrics. Weekly, celebration worship is held to praise achievements for pupils who have been recognised for a special achievement that week. Each term pupils are acknowledged in the 'Shining Star' worship, identifying those pupils who have gone above and beyond. As a result, pupils feel valued for going the extra mile. The school welcomes parents for special worship, sometimes hosting them outside in the school grounds. This positively impacts community cohesion.

The school has developed a clear understanding of spirituality. This is fostered by pupils having access to quiet areas and prayer areas which they talk about confidently. Each class has an opportunity for quiet time, and this is supported by, either lighting candles or holding shells. The pupils share enthusiastically that this is a time for stillness and reflection. Pupils turn "OW" moments into "WOW" moments and have the confidence to be resilient. The impact of this spiritual language means pupils understand that good and bad things happen. They build coping mechanisms through this understanding and as a result pupils flourish.

Leaders have established and nurtured strong relationships with worshipping communities in the area. Those with the local Baptist church are particularly strong. The opportunity to work with the pastor has enriched the opportunities for the pupils and as a result they are engaged with a wider community. Volunteers from the Church of England parish organise and run the gardening club. Pupils are enthusiastic participants and value the chance to connect with nature.

The school uses clear imagery in the vision to teach pupils about how their actions can support others. In the same way that the branches gave shelter, the pupils learn that as they

grow they can support others in their times of need. Some pupils are starting to engage with courageous advocacy projects and can talk about climate change and its impact. However, these are projects led by adults. The pupils benefit and engage with these activities but the impact will be greater when they lead ideas of their own and bring about change.

RE is thoughtfully planned, sequenced, and taught. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to teach the subject, and this is enhanced by the Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust (DGAT). The pupils value the opportunity to learn about a range of faiths and worldviews. Pupils are proud of their work and take time to explain their ideas in writing. However, pupils do not recall as much of their learning as they could.

The recently formed interim Local Governing Body has been welcomed by staff. Direct support from the DGAT has enabled governors to become effective in their roles. Strong systems now ensure that governors ask the right questions at the right times. As a result the leaders of the school are supported in their work.

During playtimes, pupils create a community of belonging, believing, and understanding, where they thrive and make friendships, linking with the vision that they can become anything. Staff care for and support the pupils. The pupils are excited about their resources and opportunities during playtimes. As a result, the children play harmoniously alongside one another.

There is a powerful sense of belonging in school, where pupils and adults believe and want to become the best. This is reinforced through policies in school and in the daily life of the community. This is a special school filled with caring people where pupils and adults are treated well.

The inspection findings indicate that St John's Church of England Academy School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

### Information

Inspection date	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2024	URN	145123
VA/VC/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	169
Diocese	Gloucestershire		
MAT/Federation	Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust		
Headteacher	Joanne Peaper		
Chair	Tim Brock		
Inspector	Jayne Neveu	No.	