

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

South Molton United Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary			
Address	Exeter Road, South Molton, Devon EX36 4EN		
Date of inspection	13 February 2020	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary
Diocese	Exeter	URN	113454

<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>Good</b>
<b>Additional Judgements</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
	<b>The effectiveness of religious education (RE)</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

South Molton United is a primary school with 200 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 above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school changed from a junior to a primary school in September 2016. The school moved into new buildings in 2017. The school is part of the Dartmoor Teaching Schools Alliance. (DTSA)

### The school's Christian vision

Uniquely different, United together, Universally prepared.

Children have a sense of belonging in a supportive, happy environment, where their range of talents will be nurtured, enabling them to flourish and achieve excellence. Every child is valued as a unique person and can develop their sense of discovery, expectation and wonder.

### Key findings

- The distinctive Christian vision is well established in daily life and consistently shapes improvements in all areas, addressing the needs of the community. Leaders are dedicated and committed to the work of this Church school. However, monitoring and evaluations by governors have been at a more informal level and not always led to improvements.
- The vision has created a rich culture of raising pupils' aspirations and belief in their own ability, so they recognise their God-given talents.
- The vision is clearly seen in the quality of relationships across the school, where all treat one another with dignity and respect.
- The RE leader brings a wealth of knowledge and experience raising the importance of the subject. Pupils relish the opportunities to explore big questions and find these relevant to their lives and thinking.
- At present pupils have limited opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate worship.

### Areas for development

- Create a detailed and systematic plan for governors regarding the monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of being a Church school.
- Extend the opportunities pupils have to plan, lead and evaluate worship so they feel that they have greater ownership in this area.
- Establish high quality planned experiences across all subject areas which deepen pupils' understanding of spirituality which they can express in a variety of ways.

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**

Leaders recognised that the previous vision had limited meaning for the community. The school's expansion to new buildings and additional staff led to a refreshed vision of which all had ownership. The vision addresses the needs of the changing locality, where pupil mobility is rising. Pupils confidently explain the importance of the vision and that everyone is special and unique. Pupils say that the Christian value of Koinonia helps them to understand the vision. They say Koinonia means using all of the school's Christian values which shape their caring community. They talk about being universally prepared, learning new skills which they can use throughout their lives. Leaders articulate the theological principles underpinning the vision. The parable of the Lost Sheep and showing God's love for everyone is central to the vision. Staff seek to show this love in daily interactions. This distinctly drives the development plan leading to the creation of an exciting curriculum which engages and challenges pupils' learning. Equally important is the growth of relationships, working together and mental health and well-being, which are priorities. A cohesive staff team share this vision, and value one another's talents. Leaders are enthusiastic and committed to the vision and seeing pupils flourish. The vision inspires leaders to make bold decisions about admissions, welcoming those who need a new start or who have a high degree of needs.

Raising pupils' self-belief and aspirations of learning is a central element of the vision. Staff have high expectations for pupils which is evident in discussions and feedback. There is a distinct culture of pupils wanting to be successful. A rich range of opportunities allow pupils to flourish and develop their God-given talents. There are fine examples in music where pupils perform in arenas such as Birmingham. The Jaguar club works closely with local industry partners enabling pupils to design a small racing car. Reaching national finals and receiving awards demonstrates to pupils what they can achieve and the importance of learning. Local visitors talk about their careers and how they overcame barriers, which raises pupils' self-belief. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. They talk about Christian values and how these support their learning. At present pupil progress and attainment is below national expectations. However, the high degree of in year mobility influences results. Current internal data shows a more promising picture. Vulnerable pupils are well supported, frequently on an individual basis and generally make comparable progress to peers. A number of case studies indicated how effectively pupils have been supported, overcoming barriers and flourishing.

The vision promotes a range of significant partnerships which enrich pupils' lives. The links with local churches is particularly strong with influential support for governance. Various ministers lead worship and support staff. Relationships with the DTSA is influential with joint training, evaluations and the sharing of subject expertise. The school's art leader has supported other schools in developing a progression of skills. Diocesan advice is drawn upon with adviser visits, training and the use of the RE hub, which has led to new teaching approaches in RE. Governors are enthusiastic and committed. However, their monitoring has been more informal and lacked a clear focus to lead to ongoing improvements.

The curriculum is imaginative and engages pupils in their learning in response to the vision. Pupils are increasingly taking ownership of their learning and what they would like to explore. They are confident to use sentence starters to raise questions which interests them. Pupils have a growing understanding of global communities, such as Uganda where they sponsor students. They talk about disadvantage and deprivation and make thoughtful links to their own work of supporting the local foodbank. Opportunities to explore other cultures are developing enhancing their understanding of difference and diversity. Pupils' understanding of the exploitation of the natural world is advanced where they challenge one another to reduce waste and to use less plastics. Some pupils are independent advocates for change and raise awareness of local issues. Pupils talk about making a difference and caring for God's world. The quality of pupils' debates concerning big questions provide moments for spiritual reflection. These are often spontaneously developed. However, there is no planning for reflections which ensure a range of areas are explored. Pupils value times of reflection which help them to feel calm. At present pupils only record their thinking in written form and not in other creative ways which would deepen their thinking.

The provision for mental health is very well developed. Pupils know how they can manage their well-being. The vision is clearly discernible in the quality of relationships and the school's caring ethos. Staff model Christian values and make pupils feel valued. Pupils recognise everyone is special and show respect for the views of others.

The standard of behaviour is at least good. Pupils understand the importance of forgiveness and make links to Jesus' teaching.

Collective worship is an important part of daily life, pupils say it brings the community together. It deepens pupils' understanding of the vision and Christian values. Worship is invitational and inclusive. Planning for worship ensures that Christian values are progressively explored and linked to biblical teaching which extends pupils' knowledge of Jesus' teachings. Pupils value the different approaches leaders bring to worship, particularly the Open the Book team where pupils readily contribute. Some pupils plan and lead worship, but this is not regular, so they do not feel that they have ownership. Pupils have limited opportunities to evaluate worship and inform changes. Prayer and reflection are well developed. Some pupils pray spontaneously and feel that these times help them to be calm. The local church provide workshops related to the main Christian festivals, so pupils understand the significance of these for Christians.

The vision ensures that RE has a distinct profile across the school. Pupils enjoy the debates linked to big questions, they are confident to raise their own questions and articulate ideas. They feel that this is a safe space to share ideas knowing these will be valued. Pupils recognise how discussions shape their thinking and how to disagree constructively with others. Their responses show a good understanding of specific RE vocabulary. Pupils are challenged by RE and feel that it has a relevance for their lives. Assessment procedures are securely in place and enable staff to make informed plans to enhance pupil progress. Pupils explore other world faiths in some depth, enhanced by visits to other places of worship. This deepens their understanding of respect for those who hold different beliefs, enabling them to make thoughtful comparisons with Christianity.



#### **The effectiveness of RE is Good**

The RE leader has a wealth of experience and is always seeking new and exciting approaches to teaching. She effectively draws upon ideas from the local RE hub to shape developments. The quality of teaching is good, where pupils are well engaged in their learning. Standards in RE are good, where significant numbers of pupils are achieving the higher levels due to the depth of their discussions. Vulnerable pupils make comparable progress to their peers.

Headteacher

Kevin O'Donnell

Inspector's name and number

Revd David Hatrey 844