

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

<b>St John's Church of England Primary School, Clifton</b>			
Address	Worrall Road, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 2UH		
Date of inspection	03 December 2019	Status of school	Voluntary controlled primary
Diocese	Bristol	URN	109146

<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

St John's Church of England School, Clifton is a primary school with 505 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, but there are a substantial number from a wide variety of black and minority ethnic groups. A few 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. Pupil mobility is above the national average. The number of pupils on roll has increased and the school now occupies two sites within walking distance of each other.

### The school's Christian vision

'Together, fly high like an eagle' (Isaiah 40:31) embodies our ambition for every person to be successful and the partnership needed to achieve this. It links with trust in God to provide strength to be the best person we can be and to enable others to do the same, so that we may all live life in all its fullness.

### Key findings

- St John's, Clifton has developed a Christian vision that is immensely inspiring for both pupils and adults. Collective worship plays a vital role in supporting and driving forward the vision.
- The school's values are fundamental to creating an extremely cohesive community where pupils and adults strive to be the best they can be. Biblical texts are part of the school's daily life but pupils do not fully grasp the original context of the texts.
- The school's leaders and their partner clergy model the behaviours and attitudes that they promote. They are very reflective practitioners and use collective worship to underpin school and spiritual progress.
- The school has grown in size and has been bold in creating a more diverse community through its expansion. However, pupils are less aware of forms of global Christianity.
- Pupils value religious education (RE) as it deepens their spirituality, allows them to explore faiths and worldviews at age appropriate depth and then form mature responses to big questions. RE leaders are tireless in their planning and in their developing of class teachers to be excellent practitioners.

### Areas for development

- Explore with pupils the context of biblical stories and teachings used regularly in school so that the pupils extend their understanding of Christian origins.
- Extend further the existing global partnerships with Christian groups in order that pupils appreciate the diversity of Christian faith and become advocates for change on global issues.

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**

The school's vision uses the eagle, the symbol for St John, in most imaginative ways. From the presence of a live eagle at the launch to the handprints of pupils forming the wings of an eagle collage, the vision stimulates both pupils and adults. All pupils speak of the vision inspiring them to be the best they can be, whether in their classwork or their support for each other or as leaders. 'Together' motivates them to be buddies in the deliberately chosen mixed-year classes and to welcome and look after newcomers. 'Fly high' impacts on pupil achievement academically as pupils consistently make progress above national averages. It also results in the widest range of achievements, from music to sport to digital leadership. The bedrock of the vision is uplifting collective worship where it is reflected upon and celebrated in all its variety.

There are six key values that turn the vision into daily living. Each has a well chosen accompanying Bible story. Pupils know that the parable of the Good Samaritan teaches respect, determination and a new definition of friendship, all vital in a diverse school and city. Passages from both the Old and New Testaments are known and used by pupils but they do not know enough about the original context of the passages. Collective worship covers one value per term. Creatively, the leader of each act of worship leaves an age-appropriate object on the table that symbolises their message. Pupils show great recall using these objects and deeply appreciate a school leader reinforcing the messages at the end of the term.

School leaders are exceptionally committed to living out the vision themselves. 'We have a moral duty to go the extra mile'. The expansion of pupil numbers results from a desire to share their inclusive vision and values with more families and, particularly, more disadvantaged families. Pupil mobility is high and the vision is extremely effective in forming a welcoming community where all are valued and cherished. The vision impacts on the way the school teaches pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A wide range of specialists are employed where necessary but the key message is about every pupil learning to be as independent as possible and to find skills for the fullest life possible. A Year 2 pupil has grown in confidence so much that he is spearheading the Christmas campaign for a national specialist charity. Very assured governors believe that the vision has greatly enhanced their meetings so that the widest understanding of pupil progress, that of how pupils can be the best possible, dominates. The school is outward looking. It is a leader in a network of nearly thirty schools, a mixture of primary and secondary and of church and community schools.

Tackling big questions, in collective worship and in the classroom, deepens spirituality. This contributes to positive mental health. Staff and pupils form a real community of inquiry and learn from each other. The talking through of tough issues also helps to foster a real family atmosphere that results in exceptionally positive behaviour and an openness that has a tangible impact on wellbeing.

Pupils relish their leadership roles. There are House captains in both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils can nominate each other to receive house points for living out the school's vision. The very mature school council translates some school policies into easier language and pictures. It works with classes on both school sites. There is a skilled worship team on each site that helps with planning, setting-up, delivering and monitoring collective worship. All pupils lead their class worship confidently, partly because they know they will be encouraged by their peers and their teachers. Pupils support a staggering range of charities, many of which are at their own instigation. Year 6 decided to support 'War Child' as a result of learning more about world war in their topic work. The school ensures that the reasons for supporting charities are as much a focus as the funds. Pupils are advocates for change, for example in campaigning successfully for their pens to be recycled.

The school has a longstanding partnership with a village in Uganda. Pupils are moved by learning about the difficult situations facing many families and are delighted to find ways to support them. Pupils, however, do not yet understand enough about the diversity of Christian faith in the world.

Partnerships with local clergy are exceptionally strong. The commitment and unity of the clergy model the togetherness envisaged by the vision. The two RE coordinators do regular, highly appreciated training for clergy on collective worship, which is also available online. This ensures that high quality worship is consistently led by all providers. Pupils get the chance to reflect deeply and age appropriately on the worship and allied big questions through class worship. The reflection areas in all classrooms are regularly used and valued. Worship prompts pupils into action, with the 'what now?' notice above the exits from classrooms providing very effective reminders. Clergy and members of local churches contribute their own ideas. As a result, reflective 'Godly Play' is being enjoyed by Year 1 pupils and their teachers are learning how to lead it themselves.

RE leaders have understood fully the role of the subject in delivering the vision. They weave together most effectively the locally agreed syllabus and elements of 'Understanding Christianity' in order to help pupils to learn and evaluate in depth a full range of faiths and worldviews. Assessment is innovative and uses weekly learning objectives. The leaders and the class teachers meet to finalise the resources and approaches for the coming week based on the feedback. This demonstrates the immense importance given by all staff to RE and results in a dynamic subject that is deeply appreciated by pupils, teachers and parents. RE leaders regularly share their expertise locally and across the diocese.

Parents are exceptionally positive about the impact of the school's inclusive vision on their children and on themselves. 'Home is an extension of school,' comments one parent. They value how the school supports their children yet also challenges them to see beyond themselves. Parents of all faiths and none trust the school to give positive messages about the role of faith and talk engagingly about how their children's spirituality has deepened as a result. Parents particularly value the week's big questions being sent to them in the weekly bulletin. Deep conversations regularly ensue. Parents also value the stable leadership of the headteacher and the teachers who 'fly like eagles' themselves.

Headteacher	Justin Hoye
Inspector's name and number	Simon Stevens 953