

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

### Swimbridge Church of England Primary School (VA)

#### Vision

To Inspire, Enable and Educate for 'Life in all its Fullness' (John 10:10)

Our vision embraces placing Jesus' promise of "life in all its fullness" at its heart. We are committed to nurturing the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional and social development of everyone in our care. We inspire and enable our children through the story of Noah's Ark, reflecting how Noah demonstrated wisdom, hope, community, dignity, respect and love for God, himself and others. Rooted in these Christian values, we nurture the personal growth of every learner. The values guide our learning behaviours and help children to understand that virtues are important for learning well and living well together.

Swimbridge Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

#### Notable Strengths

- The deeply embedded Christian vision and supporting Christian values drive the work of this school. Leaders, governors and members of the TEAM multi academy trust (the trust) work together to ensure that the vision is a living reality in pupils' education. Because of this commitment, both adults and pupils thrive.
- The curriculum and a rich variety of extra-curricular activities successfully provide opportunities for 'life in all its fullness' to pupils. They, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), grow and flourish as a result.
- Collective worship is very well planned, inspirational, popular and plays a key role in developing pupils' spiritual lives. Variety and diversity, grounded in a clear focus on the Christian vision and values, foster curiosity and create opportunities for reflection and spiritual growth.
- Religious education (RE) teaching is highly effective, meaning that pupils learn and progress well. They express their views confidently and articulately as they encounter Christianity and a range of faiths and worldviews.
- This is a happy school. Adults and pupils are supported well by leaders and the trust. Inspired by the Christian vision, pupils learn how to help each other and thereby grow in confidence and resilience.

#### Development Points

- Review the curriculum map to identify and broaden opportunities for spiritual reflection. This is so that pupils can grow and develop spiritually.
- Broadening opportunities for all pupils to deepen their understanding of justice. This is to improve their understanding of how actions can make a positive difference to others.



## Inspection Findings

### Vision and Leadership

Educating for 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10) is the driving force behind the ethos of this school. The supporting Christian values are strongly linked to effective strategies for improving learning behaviours. They have been selected by leaders to promote and live out the vision. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate these values in the classroom and around the school and are rewarded for doing so. Thus, the school provides both challenge and support for pupils to develop and thrive. Sharing good practice with other schools in the trust has made a valuable contribution to the growth of Swimbridge as a Church school. The trust also has 'life in all its fullness' as the core vision for its work. Because their vision aligns, this enables them to work effectively with the school to maximise opportunities for pupils. Governance is strong and contributes well to school growth. Leaders, supported by governors and the trust, have well planned monitoring systems in place. As a result of effective evaluation, governors have suggested, and the school has enacted, the use of reflection books for each class. Here they discuss and note their ideas on big questions of life. This is beginning to support pupils to grow and flourish spiritually.

### Vision and Curriculum

The curriculum is shaped by the vision. Pupils' learning and curiosity are inspired by a variety of visits, visitors and experiences. Sporting and cultural events are arranged with other schools in the trust, so that pupils in this small village school can experience enriching opportunities. For example, the school choir recently sang in an exciting joint schools' event. Others have attended residential alongside pupils of their age from other primary schools. These experiences work to raise aspirations of pupils and to encourage 'life in all its fullness'. 'Flourishing' lessons in family groups focus on big questions such as 'don't we deserve to be happy?' or 'what should I do about right and wrong?'. These sessions successfully help pupils to question, debate and develop their curiosity, supporting their spiritual flourishing. Due to the extra-curricular activities, pupils are articulate and reflective, drawing on these experiences to develop their responses to difficult issues and to grow spiritually. However, there are insufficient opportunities formally planned for spiritual flourishing within the curriculum map. This limits deeper opportunities for spiritual growth.

### Worship and Spirituality

There is a highly innovative, carefully planned and varied programme of worship. It inspires pupils and adults to reflect and consider their own lives, their local community and the wider world. In this way, it supports a developing understanding of Christian teaching. Pupils apply this learning to their own lives. Pupils experience a variety of worship styles. They learn about inspirational individuals and explore how their actions reflect Christian values and link to Bible stories. There are family group worship sessions based on sustainability themes which give pupils opportunities to reflect on these issues. Along with singing and celebration of individual pupils' successes, they gain a rich and inspirational experience of different ways to worship. Pupils take an active part in leading prayers and discussion in these sessions, and so are given the skills to become reflective. This supports their spiritual growth. For example, pupils volunteer to complete the final prayer using their reaction to the stories told. They are also given opportunities to reflect and pray if they wish to during the school day. This includes using dedicated quiet areas in the playground. In addition, a close partnership with the parish church results in popular and engaging worship in Church. Thus, pupils, families and the church community grow spiritually together.

### Vision and School Culture

Pupils and staff habitually show each other respect and kindness and so live well together. The school is welcoming and friendly. Pupils embrace difference and support those with additional needs with kindness. This



ethos is inspired by the vision, allowing pupils and staff to 'live life to the full'. A clear focus on the supporting Christian values of wisdom, hope, community, dignity, respect and love teaches pupils the skills to fulfil the vision. Pupils, including those who have additional needs, enjoy coming to school and are happy here. Pupils with SEND thrive at this school. This is due to the flexible, supportive approach to providing for their individual needs. Because of this, they flourish. Leaders, with the support of the trust, provide relevant training opportunities for staff. Close working relationships ensure peer-to-peer support for issues when they arise. For pupils there is a 'buddy bench' in the playground and an ethos group that ensures strong peer support. This means that pupils and adults receive timely help with their mental health and wellbeing. This enables the school community to work together to live life in school 'to the full'.

#### Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility for their own learning and for helping their peers. This is largely because of the focus on the school's Christian vision to live well together. They learn how to look out into the world outside school, and some pupils successfully act to change things for those who are less fortunate than themselves. The school's innovative citizenship award helps develop these skills and encourages pupils to take action; however, it is not accessed by all pupils in the school. Consequently, opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of justice vary across the school. There is an effective partnership with a school in India who pupils contact via letters and online. They learn from each other, and this allows pupils to understand about poverty and its impact on pupils like them. As a result, they have a developing sense of justice. They are inspired to try to alleviate poverty by raising money for their sponsored child in Africa, or to raise funds for the local foodbank at home. Pupils enthusiastically take on responsibility through a range of leadership opportunities. These include an ethos group, school council, and leading clubs at lunchtime. In this way, they are helping others to 'live life to the full'.

#### Religious Education

Leaders have produced a well-sequenced, relevant and diverse RE curriculum. Alongside Christianity, pupils learn about a variety of faiths and worldviews. Visits to places of worship, along with a visit from a Hindu guest, help pupils consolidate and grow their knowledge and understanding of global faiths and beliefs. The curriculum is effective in allowing pupils to progress in their understanding of key concepts over time. RE is given suitable priority in the timetable and is well resourced. Staff make good use of relevant training provided by the trust and diocese. They use their learning to enrich their teaching and the experiences they offer pupils. The curriculum allows pupils to learn how to analyse religious belief and practice, and to examine its relevance to their own lives.

RE teaching is well planned, inspiring and highly effective. Teachers use skilful questioning to draw out pupils' knowledge, understanding and views. Pupils enjoy RE, and they show enthusiasm and engagement in their lessons. Assessment is secure, accessible and informs next steps in teaching and learning. Pupils' writing reflects their understanding of challenging concepts and ideas. They discuss and debate with knowledge and confidence. Pupils are, as a result, making progress in this subject.

## Information

Address	Barnstaple Hill, Swimbridge, Barnstaple, EX32 0PJ		
Date	20 January 2026	URN	113455
Type of school	Voluntary aided	No. of pupils	83
Diocese	Exeter		
MAT	In a management partnership with TEAM multi academy trust		
Headteacher	Gemma Poland (head of school) Dan Polak (TEAM executive headteacher)		
Chair of Governors	Ted Picken		
Inspector	Judith Larrington		