

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

<b>Blue Coat Church of England Primary School</b>			
<b>Address</b>	Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire GL12 7BD		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	10 June 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	VA primary
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>URN</b>	<b>115734</b>

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</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>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>Excellent</b>

### School context

Blue Coat is a large primary school with 307 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages but is rising. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national figures. However, the number of pupils who present with more complex special needs is also increasing. The school has experienced fluctuating numbers on roll due to falling birth rates locally.

### The school's Christian vision

'Future readiness' for our pupils is built on the foundation of God's Love. Therefore, we aspire to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10) and to enable others to do the same. (Matthew 22: 37-39)

### Key findings

- There is a positive impact of the vision and core values on academic progress and personal development. However, members of the school community do not readily articulate the Bible roots or explicitly Christian origins of the vision. This affects the outcome of this denominational inspection.
- An aspirational culture enables resilience in learning. Adults and pupils are reflective learners, enthusiastic to succeed, now and into the future.
- Staff are talented, keen to learn as well as teach, and to support each other. They are key to the success of the school. Specialist support for those pupils who are more vulnerable or who have special educational needs/disabilities is effective.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about religious education and enjoy the many opportunities to learn through creating artwork in the subject. The subject is exceptionally well-led.
- The focus on outdoor play and learning enriches the lives of pupils, allowing them to develop life-enhancing skills which are integral to 'Future Readiness'.

### Areas for development

- Make more explicit the Christian foundations of the vision so that leaders, including governors, monitor its impact and direct the ongoing development of Blue Coat as a Church school.
- Utilise the vision and its Bible roots more consistently in policies, key documentation and the website so these more fully reflect the strengths of the school.
- Consider additional ways for all ages of pupils to be more active and regular leaders of worship and so extend pupil leadership across the school.

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

Aspiration for the future characterises Blue Coat. Leaders have hitherto been sensitive to some perceptions within the local community that the school was 'only for Christians'. This is why the vision has been expressed as more implicitly Bible-based in origin until recently. It is clear, however, that parents and family members, staff and governors appreciate the moral compass which the Anglican foundations of the school provide for all. Leaders have made good progress on the areas to improve recommended in the last denominational inspection. At this time, there is scope for the vision to be more fully and consistently referenced in policies and the website. Nevertheless, the headteacher is highly reflective and, in some aspects, visionary in his approach to how the school meets the needs of pupils, both now and into adulthood. One pupil said the vision meant 'more than learning, it means getting ready for life'.

'Future-proofing' pupils for the next stage of their lives and learning is clearly successful. Academic results in National assessments are consistently high. For those pupils who have a range of additional needs, the school gives support through targeted interventions. Leaders ensure specialist staff are in place, despite the pressures staffing levels place on the budget. They attribute their decisions to Matthew's gospel, where Jesus encourages fair and compassionate treatment of all. As a result, pupils make at least good progress from their starting points. The core values of respect, responsibility, creativity and happiness deliver the vision. 'Happiness' keeps me going said one. Another explained how the emphasis on creativity made him think, saying that 'creativity is like Noah. He created the ark and also trusted in God. At school, creativity helps me really think. I try and an idea pops up in my head.' The values are well-understood as reflecting Christian teaching while being helpful to everyone. As such, they have a very positive impact on pupils.

The curriculum and extra-curricular provision reflect the commitment that pupils experience 'life in its fullness'. Innovative outdoor learning has a profound impact on pupils' confidence and ability to learn. The development of the outside spaces is determined by what pupils want as well as what staff know will work. This is a school where playtimes contribute to learning as much as time in classrooms. The joyful enthusiasm to play in the beach space, or to write ribbon prayers for a tree in the quiet area, demonstrates the impact of such a creative site. Above all, Blue Coat is an enabling environment for all ages and interests. The use of the playground and field is inspirational. Governors are committed to appoint appropriately trained play leaders, in spite of financial implications. In addition, activities such as the oversubscribed Ignite! Christian-based club and DB8 (debating) for Year 6 exemplify that spiritual and social development is integral to fullness of life at Blue Coat.

Pupils speak eloquently of how they feel safe and happy. When there are 'fallings out' they are clear that adults will help, but that they will try and sort matters out for themselves. This shows that personal responsibility is encouraged. The behaviour policy is effective and makes clear how the chosen core values, particularly respect, enable pupils to be compassionate towards others. Pupils are inspired to take action to challenge injustice through a range of fundraising and charitable action. They are empowered to be agents for change. Those who are exploring their own faith, state they are guided by positive role models, like Moses and Noah. Pupils are confident to discuss how the values help them. They know the Bible contains a wealth of examples of the core values. In this way, the impact of the Christian values on personal growth and spiritual development is clear.

Mutual respect underpins the partnerships with families and those from churches and other organisations in the local area. Parents appreciate how staff are approachable and supportive. They value that the school consults with them and is keen to hear their views. Attending worship and other special services in Church, enables school and families to unite and share in the vision of a happy community, built on Christian foundations.

True to these foundations, the worship life of the school engages everyone in matters of faith. Worship is inclusive. It offers experiences of the life and teaching of Jesus to those who wish to explore their own views. In this academic year, a review of worship has been undertaken and arrangements renewed. This coincides with a vacancy in the parish church. Leaders are working to widen the range of representatives from different Christian churches, for example Catholic and Quaker communities. Their intent is to extend pupils' awareness that Christians worship in different ways. Representatives from Baptist and Methodist churches already lead worship and provide a varied perspective. At this time, pupils are less aware that there are Christian churches around the world. Worship is

planned around the Christian narrative. This includes marking the main events in the Christian calendar. As such, pupils have a good knowledge of Christian traditions. For example, acts of worship commence with the call to worship, 'This is the day the Lord has made.' The use of candles and coloured cloths to mark the Church's year also adds to the experience of worship, which is Anglican in nature. The headteacher ensures worship challenges pupils and adults in their thinking. A recent focus on Pentecost was made relevant to pupils. They were encouraged to discuss their views with a partner in response to searching questions. Pupils especially enjoy worship when they are actively involved and express a wish to do this on a more regular basis.

RE makes a strong contribution to the 'Future Readiness' of pupils. They are confident to describe the purpose and value of the subject. RE enables pupils to reflect on difference and diversity in our world. They are conscious that we are all equal, but not all the same. Several pupils explained that RE helps them to understand each other and that this will help, both now and when they grow up. The school is blessed in the commitment and expertise of the RE lead. She devotes considerable time to act as an advocate for the subject and to support colleagues in school and beyond. The Diocese recognises the excellence of her work. It is keen to build on her exemplary work for other schools through chairing of the RE network. Stunning artwork based on RE lessons demonstrates the high status of the subject. The school is rightly proud of displaying its RE and spiritual art in Gloucester cathedral. RE is creative and thought provoking. Use of 'Understanding Christianity' is improving pupils' confidence to engage with Bible texts.



**The effectiveness of RE is Excellent**

Teaching and so learning in RE is excellent. Work in books and on display exemplifies the strong progress pupils make in all year groups. Assessment is robust and feeds into progress measures across the school. Many pupils make better progress in RE than in other subjects as a direct result of the outstanding skill and commitment of teachers.

Headteacher	Mark Ryan
Inspector's name and number	Allyson Taylor 768