



DRAFT REPORT

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Withycombe Raleigh Church of England Primary School	
Address	Withycombe Raleigh Village Road, Exmouth, EX8 3BA
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Excellent

School's vision
'Growing Happy, Caring, Hearts and Minds'. The foundation of this can be found in the Bible, John 15: 12; 'My command is this: love each other as I have loved you'.
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's Christian vision is rooted in love of God and neighbour. This is powerfully visible in the way each individual is valued and encouraged, and particularly through the attention given to support and wellbeing for everyone in the school community. • The school promotes its vision through the values of Generosity, Respect, Agape (Love), Courage, and Empathy (GRACE). These run deep in every aspect of school life and have a powerful, enduring influence on children. • The commitment and creativity of church school leaders in their attention to the quality and impact of collective worship is a particular strength of the school. • The school's commitment to a vision of 'life in all its fulness' (John 10: 10) means that children benefit from a breadth of opportunities during their time in the school. Leaders are working rapidly to strengthen the focus with which the taught curriculum is delivered and monitored. • There are real strengths in religious education (RE). Children build a good understanding of Christianity and other world faiths, showing rich reflective thinking. However, accuracy and depth are not always consistent.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine the clarity and focus with which leaders and governors evaluate the impact of their Christian vision for the school. In the context of the school's rounded and holistic ambitions for children, ensure the effectiveness of the taught curriculum is secure. • Extend the school's partnership work with the church, local schools and the diocese. This will enable the significant strengths of the school in worship, ethos and support to benefit others more widely. • In RE, support teaching consistently to explore the 'why' as well as the 'what' of human religious behaviour. Continue to develop professional confidence when teaching faiths other than Christianity.

Inspection findings

Withycombe Raleigh is a friendly school, where pupils behave well and treat others with care, dignity and respect. This is because of its vision that everyone should be able to flourish in a community founded on the love of God and each other. In line with the vision of the school, everything flows from the love of one another. The vision is expressed through the school's emphasis on Generosity, Respect, Agape (love), Courage and Empathy. Through these 'GRACE' values, the vision pervades every aspect of school life and reaches out across the wider school community. Pupils talk readily about the importance of love and treating people equally. 'I think my time at Withycombe has made me more thoughtful and kind'. Parents, both with and without a religious faith, appreciate the partnership of the school in the upbringing of their children. They see how the school's ethos influences their children at home. For example in trying to include everyone, or showing courage in speaking up for others.

The vision, of love of one another, is seen in the way the school values each individual, seeking their rounded well-being. High quality relationships and well-considered use of space ensure a warm sense of community. Such a large and busy school 'might be overwhelming, but it's not.' Staff speak positively of their support from the school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) flourish because they feel secure and well cared for. Leaders deploy the school's resources to ensure there is wide-ranging and high-quality support. As a result the school is sought out by families, especially those seeking additional help for their children. Pupils who have struggled in other schools often succeed at Withycombe. This is because of the skill, commitment and industry of staff but also the acceptance and willing support of other pupils. Parents say that, because of the personalised approach, their children are able to do more than was ever believed possible. The SEND team impacts on the wider community through the provision of well-regarded classes in a range of children's issues. These draw in people from beyond the school including other childcare professionals. Military families particularly appreciate the support of the experienced school team.

Pupils clearly enjoy being in school and value the rich variety the curriculum offers. Leaders are passionate about giving pupils a rounded education, driven by their vision of 'life in all its fullness' (John 10: 10). Through strategies such as the 'Withycombe 60 – 60 brilliant things to do while at our school', the school secures a wide range of experiences. This includes fun and adventure, on and off-site, but also care for others and learning about difference. Of particular note are the opportunities for sailing, excellence in sport, high levels of engagement with the Forest School and visits to Exeter mosque. However, within the taught curriculum, innovations and post-covid interventions have not delivered a consistently high level of effectiveness. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's Christian vision in the curriculum has not been sufficiently agile to note and respond to this swiftly. Leaders, including governors, have now defined priorities for learning more sharply, setting the school on a journey of recalibrating and refining its work.

RE is strongly supported by leadership and well regarded by staff and pupils. They express rich thinking whilst also demonstrating good knowledge recall, enabling them to make links between topics. This is supported by innovative learning strategies such as writing 'postcards to my future self'. Through such initiatives, Withycombe contributes to Diocesan development more widely. Significant time given to the study of Christianity in each year group means pupils gain a deeper understanding of the faith as they grow. This confident learning extends into their encounter with a wider diversity of world religions in the third term of each year. Here they are eager, respectful and curious. Younger pupils engage enthusiastically with

visitors and artefacts from other faiths. Older pupils draw on a range of religions and worldviews in deep thinking about life's 'big questions'. Subject leadership is committed and enthusiastic. However, there is a degree of unevenness in RE across the school. In some places, questioning does not go on to unlock deeper issues of religious meaning and subject knowledge is hesitant. Opportunities to see Christianity as a worldwide movement are missed. Monitoring and evaluation is well-informed and supportive, and a common lesson framework is now developing greater consistency of practice. However it does not yet fully inform planning for reflection and deeper understanding.

The Church School Group is a creative and enthusiastic team of staff, governors and interested partners that drives forward the church school ethos. Through their work the school excels. They ensure that worship across the school, at cohort and class level, is imaginative and engaging. Staff, including those with no personal religious faith, are empowered to deliver thoughtful worship richly rooted in the Christian tradition. This is supplemented by a number of creative and inspiring faith events across the year. These engage the whole school community with the Christian narrative in ways that are enjoyable and stimulating. The commitment of the Group to the breadth of their work is outstanding: 'it can't be a half-hearted thing'. As a result of these high-quality experiences, pupils take the school's values more deeply to heart and develop confident goodness. This provides a platform for the school's enthusiastic and innovative outward-facing work, such as sharing Kindness Week across the town. This is a real strength of the school.

The school sets out to nurture pupils who will be compassionate citizens and good neighbours. Pupils show this through many charity events and individual initiatives, such as practising sign language to support a new classmate. However they are also learning to go beyond 'charity' to question injustice and speak out with courage. 'The school helps me speak out my opinions'. For example, pupils wanted to make personal links with their partner school in Africa in order to understand the community better. The resulting video conversation is rich evidence of developing empathy. As the school spreads its vision of love for others, it offers opportunities for the wider community to join in. This is one of the many ways the school works in close partnership with families, who become co-workers in the expression of Withycombe's vision, especially through acts of generosity. Partnerships with other local church schools and the diocese enable the school both to give and receive, offering real opportunity for further development.

Information			
School	Withycombe Raleigh Church of England Primary School	Inspection date	15 June 2023
URN	113355	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Exeter	Pupils on roll	607
Headteacher	Emma Jones		
Chair of Governors	Sue Humphries		
Inspector	Barbara Easton	No.	862