



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Tanworth-in-Arden Church of England Primary School and Nursery

Address The Green, Tanworth-in-Arden, Warwickshire, B94 5AJ

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 **Good**

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) **Excellent**

School's vision

In God's Family, learning, loving, growing to be our very best.

Life to the Full (John 10:10) Lived out day by day by our key values of Community, Dignity, Hope and Wisdom.

Key findings

- The new Christian vision is already showing its effectiveness in meeting the learning and personal needs of pupils and adults. Formal systems for monitoring the impact of the vision are at an early stage.
- Long-standing connections with the local church enrich the lives of both communities and are a powerful example of what such relationships can be in this Church school, which is on a 'journey' as its school mission states, towards excellence.
- Religious education (RE) is exceptionally well led, has a profound impact and is a living expression of the commitment 'to be our very best.'
- Collective worship is woven deeply into the fabric of the school. It contributes well to the flourishing of pupils and adults. It is not consistently invitational in approach. Attendees may feel compelled, rather than invited to take part.
- An exciting and engaging curriculum provides time for reflection and spiritual growth across all ages. This is currently limited by the lack of a shared understanding of what spirituality means at Tanworth-in-Arden school.

• Areas for development

- Embed the Christian vision, as distinct from the values, in policies and documentation so that leaders at all levels are better equipped to capture its impact in their monitoring.
- Ensure that acts of collective worship, in school and church, use consistently invitational language and practice so that those with a range of views and beliefs may be present with integrity.
- Explore a shared understanding and definition of spirituality in order to extend the rich spiritual offer in the curriculum and wider life of 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

The nurturing, family ethos is obvious in the everyday life of this delightful Church school. Christian values unite this family in a shared drive towards a life full of hope, compassion for others and self-worth. Under the committed leadership of the headteacher, academic standards are significantly improved. She is relentless in expecting the best for staff and pupils. The vision, recently created after extensive discussion in September, encapsulates the high aspirations of all in the school community. The challenge of Covid-19 has brought the school family even closer. A parent commented on how the school had impacted on her: 'A shining school where church and school help us feel connected, as if the arms of loving family surround us.' Pupils who need additional help are extremely well supported. Parents warmly appreciate the regular communication between staff and families. At this time, the values are better expressed and understood than the vision. As it is so new, leaders acknowledge that there is more to do to fully embed it and therefore see its impact.

Outstanding support for mental health and wellbeing ensures no one is allowed to falter. As in a loving family, if an adult or pupil stumbles, a hand is offered to help regain a firm footing. Spending decisions demonstrate this commitment to being the best: 'We put our money where our vision is', commented a member of staff. Therapeutic counselling, additional special needs coordinator time and the support of the children and families' worker from the parish church demonstrate living the vision. They are relentless in meeting the needs of those who are vulnerable. Staff are learning 'Makaton' sign language to support pupils with communication needs, and this is strengthening their connection with each other as well as pupils. A member of staff, newer to Church schools, describes their experience as 'finding the missing bit in my life as a teacher, knowing I am valued for who I am as well as what I do.' Due to the compassionate care for all in the school, positive relationships support good self-esteem, positive behaviour and these enhance learning. The 'Taking Care' programme supports pupils' wellbeing very effectively and is testament to the school's focus on the values of community and dignity.

Bonds between the school and church are close. Extra-curricular activities, such as 'Bible Art' and 'Rock 'n Worship' enrich the spiritual growth of those who attend. The school currently hosts Sunday services and 'Messy Church' during renovations to the church building. The bonds are growing closer, even during this period without a vicar. This is due to adults living out the passionately held Christian values of hope and community, and the stalwart service of governors and other members of the parish. While there is much to commend, the close ties mean that some aspects of collective worship and understanding of the school as a Church school are blurred with practices common to services in church. This is seen in some of the language used regularly in school worship. This is not always invitational, meaning pupils feel they must comply by repeating aloud greetings and blessings, whether they think of themselves as Christian or not. A similar blurring of RE and worship is seen in classrooms where the prayer/reflection space is also an RE display. Such closeness demonstrates how deeply the Christian foundations go but the overlap means that worship is not always understood as distinct from RE.

Nevertheless, the impact of collective worship is palpable. It is a highlight of the day and builds the strong sense of community while offering spiritual refreshment. Worship in the hall and in classrooms is engaging and builds the values of dignity and community. Pupils contribute to ideas for worship and enjoy leading many aspects. Their confidence in this has grown and some now support Sunday worship. Worship is carefully planned to focus on the life and teaching of Jesus. Prayer is beautifully woven through the school day with classes pausing to reflect or pray before lunch and at home time. The worship lead is very knowledgeable and engages with professional advice on developing this vital aspect in the life of the school. Worship is usually led by him or a senior leader. Other staff support worship in classrooms but do not routinely facilitate whole school acts of worship. Pupils really enjoy when 'Open the Book' volunteers from church tell Bible stories and are more than ready to take an active role in this, planning and delivering their own versions. When possible, special services in church punctuate the school year. These enable pupils to have a good understanding of Anglican traditions and the rhythm of the Church year. Worship also inspires all ages to think beyond their immediate village and family. Several examples of charitable action are instigated in worship. These include projects to support reading with schools in the developing world. These links widen pupils' horizons. Through the various pupil leadership opportunities, such as the 'eco council', pupils are active agents of change, offering their own suggestions in support of good causes.

Opportunities for reflection abound across curriculum subjects and indeed the school site. The prayer garden has been developed to offer practical and symbolic activities to pray or reflect. In this aspect, the school benefits from its relationship with the parish church. As a result, pupils express their views with a degree of maturity and consideration of 'big questions'. However, a definition and shared understanding of spirituality is not in place. Pupils and adults lack confidence to express their

views using the language of spirituality. Stunning example of emerging spirituality was seen in an English lesson, where pupils were writing poems about what to put in their Christmas box. One wrote of hope as ‘a heart of flame in a red-hot fire, burning away hatred.’

RE makes an impressive contribution to flourishing. Led with great skill and commitment, the subject is well-balanced between academic learning and awareness of similarities and differences between a range of different religions and worldviews. Pupils are keen thinkers and able to discuss the lives of worshippers across a number of faith traditions. Pupils find their lessons stimulating and know that the subject helps them appreciate their place in our multi-cultural world. The RE lead supports colleagues with regular staff development and practical guidance. As a result, work in RE demonstrates pupils’ growing confidence to use specific vocabulary, known as ‘religious literacy’. Leaders ensure he has time and resources to fulfil this key post. A new member of staff described how much he has improved her subject knowledge. The RE lead also contributes to the work of the Diocese by sharing good practice with other schools. This again exemplifies the aspiration to extend the family and enable others beyond Tanworth-in-Arden to be their very best.

The journey of this school to ‘be the very best’ as a Church school is clear. It is a school in good heart, full of faith in each other and God. Leaders, staff, pupils and parents are united by the commitment to make the vision a living example of a flourishing community.



The effectiveness of RE is

Excellent

Pupils make excellent progress due to high quality teaching and learning and outstanding subject leadership. Assessment is rigorous. As a result, teachers use their findings to inform next steps and capture where religious literacy is developing. A very high percentage of pupils make at least expected progress in the subject, including those with additional needs.

The curriculum is engaging and creative. Recording of work in RE books demonstrates the high status of the subject. Standards demonstrated in RE are driving improvements in other curriculum subjects. Coverage of the syllabus during pandemic lockdowns is particularly impressive.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	8 December 2021	URN	138909
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2015		
School status	Standalone academy inspected as VA	NOR	197 and 28 in Nursery
Name of MAT/Federation	Tanworth-in-Arden Academy Trust		
Diocese	Birmingham		
Headteacher	Shelley Bamford		
Pupil profile	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 below national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	Current clergy vacancy. Building work in church prevents the school visiting for services and curriculum activities.		
Inspector’s name	Allyson Taylor	No.	768