

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

West Dean Church of England Primary School	
Address	West Dean, Chichester, PO18 0RJ
School vision	
<p>To do our best in all we do, with God's love. 'Love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples.' John 13: 34-35</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Christian leadership at all levels is skilfully driving change based on the vision. This is enabling pupils and adults to thrive in their learning and personal development. • The vision securely informs the high quality, child centred provision which is demonstrated in deeply caring relationships between all members of the school. • The school takes full advantage of its stunning rural location and close partnership with the local community. These provide quality opportunities for enriching both the curriculum and wider learning experiences, including diverse venues and formats for worship and reflection. • Religious education (RE) has significantly developed through the adoption of high quality, confidently taught, RE curriculum resources. Consequently, pupils thrive in RE and develop a secure understanding of a diverse range of religions and other worldviews including Christianity. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a shared language and understanding of spirituality throughout the school. This is to ensure that existing high-quality spiritual development opportunities are used effectively to enable everyone equal opportunity to flourish spiritually. • Develop a range of partnerships beyond the local community in order to provide opportunities to live out the vision in a wider world context. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>West Dean's deep-rooted Christian vision, based on love, is at the heart of this impressive small rural school. It accurately reflects the context of the school's Christian foundation and community. The vision is securely expressed in daily life through its five well-embedded Christian values of love, joy, hope, peace and faith. Pupils and adults readily articulate the vision and values and actively demonstrate them in their daily lives and relationships towards each other. Love for one another is tangible in this school and underpins its deeply embedded caring ethos. This is a warm, friendly school in which everyone is loved and nurtured in a culture of tolerance, respect and dignity. Relationships and behaviour are extremely positive. Pupils show courtesy to adults, play well together and enthusiastically help each other during the day. An effective restorative approach to behaviour helps pupils learn from their mistakes. Pupils understand the importance of forgiveness and starting afresh. Staff give genuine, caring support to each other professionally and personally, and compassionately help parents when they have difficult times. Pupils and staff proudly celebrate West Dean as a 'small school with a big heart' in their school song and prayer, and clearly live this motto daily.</p>	



The vision holistically shapes the strategic and operational direction of the school. Strong Christian leadership by the headteacher and staff is ensuring the successful implementation of positive developments and exemplary practices that promote the vision. Well-trained and highly informed governors provide critical support and challenge to the leadership. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems are in place alongside effective feedback opportunities for staff and parents, The 'Pupils' Parliament' gives pupils a strong voice that makes significant contributions to school decision making. Consequently, governors and leaders accurately know the impact of the developments on the school community, such as on pupils' learning and well-being. This ensures school development plans are securely informed and fully align with promoting the vision.

High quality, child-centred curricular provision and practices are a recent school development strongly informed by the vision. Effective changes to curriculum planning and assessment have securely put the children and their learning needs first. Carefully chosen topics motivate pupils which is enabling them to succeed in their learning. Pupils demonstrate a love of learning which they keenly share with each other and parents. For example, a recent dinosaur topic innovatively displayed as an interactive museum exhibition enabling pupils to actively involve their parents in the sharing of their learning. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully supported to achieve the vision for them to do their best due to effective leadership. Carefully targeted adult support, provision of special resources and adaption of the curriculum ensure SEND pupils achieve well. The school's stimulating rural location and close partnership with a local college is exceptionally well used. This provides quality opportunities for curriculum enrichment, outdoor worship and the promotion of spiritual development and well-being.

Good mental health and well-being of the school community have high importance and are strongly promoted using exemplary practices. Pupils self-register their feelings and emotion daily, enabling the staff to help them at difficult times. Inspirational well-being walks in the nearby college grounds and forest school experiences are eagerly anticipated and greatly enjoyed. The resident therapy dog and care provision before and after school add further quality support. Staff welfare is equally effective. It is a regular agenda item at staff and governor meetings with appropriate action taken as necessary. Professional development is promoted ensuring staff feel confident in their teaching. Consequently, staff are clearly dedicated, feel valued and respected, resulting in high levels of retention.

Collective worship is a special time of the whole school coming together spiritually. It is imaginatively symbolised by pupils joining four wooden segments representing each class into a circle. This promotes pupils' understanding of their part in the larger school family and God's wider world. Worship is securely shaped by the vision through themes reflecting on Christian values, biblical teaching and other world views. All pupils and staff are invited to attend, including parents and carers for special worship events, and enthusiastically join in with the singing and prayers. Pupils frequently participate in parts of worship by sharing a reading, prayer or a personal reflection. Pupils enjoy worship times and can easily recall one that has inspired them to behave differently afterwards. Prayer and reflection are important elements of worship described by pupils as speaking to God, and positively promotes adults and pupils' spiritual development. The school's rural location and local college grounds are used effectively to provide quality opportunities for worship and to promote spiritual development. However, the impact of these opportunities is inconsistent because there is no shared language of spirituality or agreement of what spiritual development means.

A strong, highly valued partnership with the local community is a practical expression of the school community living and promoting the vision. An impressive range of people from the local churches and community regularly lead worship. These include the rector and local secondary school pupils, enabling pupils to experience different forms of worship. Pupils have a strong sense of justice and are keen courageous advocates for their local neighbourhood. They successfully engage with the community for charitable fundraising, supporting a local foodbank, and social action projects to address issues of poverty and justice. Concerned for road safety near the school, pupils successfully lobbied the county council to

have traffic calming measures installed. Opportunities to live the vision through partnerships beyond the local school community are underdeveloped.

Religious education (RE) is an important part of the curriculum which has significantly developed in the past two years. Funded by the local church, high-quality teaching resources that are supported by the diocese have been bought and used effectively. These strengthen the depth of pupils' knowledge of Christianity and enhances their understanding of a range of religions and worldviews.

Well chosen, on-going training has ensured staff use these resources with increasing confidence. Thorough planning by the RE leader ensures the curriculum is appropriately sequenced, well balanced and challenging, with engaging, learning activities. Pupils enjoy RE. They confidently discuss challenging questions and reflect on their learning. They keenly explore key concepts in various religions, and world views such as Humanism, enriching their understanding of diversity. Consequently, pupils thrive in RE and demonstrate secure understanding of Christianity and other world views.

The inspection findings indicate that West Dean Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	12 October 2023	URN	126004
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	98
Diocese	Chichester		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Chris Williams		
Chair	Edward Younghusband		
Inspector	Richard Dyer	No.	513